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CAROLINE
DE
MONTMORENCI:
A TALE.



CAROLINE
DE
MONTMORENCI:
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A TALE,

FOUNDED IN FACT.

BY LA MARQUISE DE *****.

..... She never told her love,
But let concealment, like a worm i'the bud,
Feed on her damask cheek : she pin'd in thought ;
And, with a green and yellow melancholy,
She sat like Patience on a monument,
Smiling at grief.

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1794.



CAROLINE DE MONTMORENCI.

Benedictine Convent.

I Thank you a thousand times for your letter, my dear Caroline;—indeed my spirits greatly wanted the assurance of your safe arrival at the Chateau de Diefbach; for the parting with you, though our separation may be short, had most terribly depressed them. Since you was seven years old, you have never been from under the eyes of my ever-lamented friend the Duchess of C——, or mine; and your present visit seems to me to be the launching you, for the first time, on the tempestuous sea of the world;—beware its rocks, my love:—I speak not

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from

from prejudice acquired by a forty years seclusion from it, but dire experience!—In the morning of my life, its paths to me seemed strewed with flowers; but alas! I had not trod them long, ere they withered, fast withered, under my feet. But I do not wish to terrify, only caution you, my dear girl; you are now, I may say, of a character pure and artless as infancy; be guarded against imitating all the worldly customs you will meet with:—forgive my vanity, in desiring you, before you act on any important occasion, to ask your heart this simple question—Would the Abbess approve?—Believe me, Caroline, if your heart answers No, whatever you meant to sanction would have been to your disadvantage; for, though the utmost of my ambition is, that your conduct should be guided by propriety, yet I do not wish you to become gloomy, or reserved; therefore
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can never object to whatever promotes innocently your chearfulness. There is one thing, above all others, I most earnestly recommend to you,—it is your constant practice of devotion, night and morning; let no gay scenes interfere with this, no wandering thoughts render it merely outward, but think no day perfectly fulfilled that you have not, the first thing, thanked your Creator for having suffered you to rise again in safety, and the last, for having averted those evils from your head, which have fallen upon many of your fellow creatures, even since your last address to his infinite mercy; to which incessantly I recommend you.

Don't fail to write to sister Agnes; ~~she~~ loves you with true affection; unbosom yourself, on every occasion, to her; I shall never wish to see your letters, certain, that whatever I ought to know, my child will

inform me of, and feeling that the secrets of sixteen will be communicated with less reserve to thirty, than to sixty-five.

I know it is foolish, but when you passed our great folding doors, my weak heart was struck with the thought, you never would return to me, as at that moment, lovely and contented!—but these are the fancies of a melancholy brain!—Adieu, Caroline.

CAROLINE DE MONTMORENCI.

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TO SISTER AGNES.

Chateau de Dießbach.

I Wrote, my dear friend, by the last post, to my beloved Abbess, and deferred, till now, writing to you, that I might have more to communicate, and be able to fulfil your desire of being particular in my details. This chateau of my uncle's is extremely old, but in excellent repair, and magnificent; courts, galleries, and staircases bewilder and lead astray those yet unacquainted with them. At present, our party consists only of my uncle, aunt, Louisa, Edward, and myself; but numbers are expected; for Monsieur de Montmorenci, from being so long used to public life, could sooner live without food than company. Every day, I hear of some new person who means to join us next month;

for every body is put off, at my aunt's desire, till that time, on poor Louisa's account, who is, you know, slowly recovering from the effects of her sad fever:—she looks beautiful, but is still very weak; her mother would willingly be contented with our society the whole summer, but that is such a retreat as she never dares propose, knowing it would be unpleasant to my uncle.

Captain de Montmorenci is really very amiable; he is to marry Mademoiselle de Valence, as soon as they return to Paris.—The young Count de Grammont, a brother officer of his, comes the day after tomorrow; he is allowed to come before any body else, as he will be a constant companion for Edward, now that we sit a great deal in Louisa's room. I continue extremely well, and beg you will thank the whole community for their kind fears for
their

their complexion, as I certainly must deem mine so, owing it to their great care of my health.

Pray make our dear Abbess walk as usual; embrace her for me.

TO THE SAME.

I Have nothing new to tell you, my dear sister Agnes——yes I have, yes I have,— I forgot——The Count de Grammont is come; he has been here three days; and now I am of opinion that my music-master is not so handsome as I used to tell you I thought him; for he would, I do believe, be quite ugly by the side of Monsieur de Grammont; he plays on the flute too, and sings delightfully: I mean, when we are more intimate, to ask him to sing with me the *Te Deum* you sang so divinely when you took the black veil: I remember it perfectly; and the harmony of your voice still dwells upon my ear. He really is good humoured; for, knowing already that I am fond of flowers, he every morning puts a nosegay on my breakfast-plate, and says, if Louisa would come to the drawing-room, he would read to us, while we work. I walked, this morning,

morning, with my cousin and him ; for my aunt seldom leaves the grounds. When we were upon a very high hill, Edward said, " Caroline, I think you are more formed for liberty than for a convent life ;" for I was admiring the extensive view—" Convent life !" said Monsieur de Grammont ; " why sure Mademoiselle de M—— is not to be a Nun !" and his face, Agnes, turned, if you will believe me, redder than scarlet. Now that was surely very good natured ; for he seemed sorry because he thought I should not like it. My uncle is all anxiety, lest we should find this place dull ; I can safely say, I look forward almost with regret to the time when our circle will be enlarged ; yet, believe me, my dear friend, I do not forget Bethune, and never see the setting sun, that I do not look with tenderness on its beams, which I know fall immediately on the window of your cell. If we walk by moonlight too,

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then

then I look up, and think, perhaps at that very moment your eyes are directed to the same object. Adieu, my ever-loved sister; you will always, in your letters, find a note for the Abbess; and to you I leave the saying every thing proper to all my dear friends.

Chateau

Chateau de Diesbach.

JUST as you imagine, Verneuil,—just as you imagine,—I am in love again!—Now, preach for an hour on my fickleness, and accuse me of every crime; by all that's good, I had a great mind not to have told you this; you are such a reformer on those points, faith, I am afraid of submitting them to you: one thing you may be proud of, you stand alone in the regiment, I believe; for I think, in the tender way, we subalterns to you are nearly on a par, though you would willingly give me the title of weather-cock to the dragoons.—After this preface, you shall, in a few words, learn the affair:—the present object of my sighs, then, is Mademoiselle de Montmorenci; more interesting than really beautiful, it is impossible to be with her and not feel attached; besides, the novelty of her character charms me: never before

out of the Benedictine Convent at Bethune, except once a year, for two months, with her grandmother the late D——s of C——, who always lived in the most perfect retreat. She seems the angel of mercy sent to visit the earth. The sweetness of her countenance, and innocence of her manner, are peculiar to herself.—Then she sings divinely, and makes me accompany her in a Latin prayer to the Virgin, which she sings so sweetly, I fancy her one of the celestial choir.

Now, you will imagine every thing settled, Verneuil; but not at all: I have never yet spoke of love, lest I should terrify her, and she should break those precious habits of innocent intimacy we live in, and without which I should now seem indeed as a fallen angel. She writes for ever to her Abbess, and a favourite sister: I wonder if she mentions me to them—

them—I'd give the world to know in what stile. She is this moment come in with Montmorenci, to ask me to walk with them to a school in the wood, where she is going to distribute rewards, she, and Mademoiselle de Montmorenci, have made for the children. Now, Verneuil, if you expect me to add one word more—why, you never loved, that's all.

Chateau de Diesbach.

TO SISTER AGNES.

WERE you, and our Abbess here, dearest sister Agnes, my happiness would be complete: I can give you, by writing, but a very faint description of our comfortable manner of living; for Louisa now is well enough to join all our parties; and the whole family unite in rendering my situation agreeable: she is a most amiable girl, highly accomplished, without one spark of vanity. My aunt is goodness itself, and my uncle more affectionate than I can express; his only foible, in my eye, is being too unguarded in conversation: he often, for instance, says a thing he would, the next moment, gladly recall; and his good-humoured sorrow for it, renders those in question infinitely more distressed than if he let it pass: he often talks to Louisa and

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me about marrying us, and that too before Monsieur de Grammont, and Edward, when we had much rather he would be silent on that subject.

My dear Abbess, in her last letter, says, no doubt Monsieur de Montmorenci is perfectly acquainted with the character of the Count de Grammont, with whom you pass so much time, and knows it to be worthy and estimable.

Now, Agnes, a thought has struck me—Suppose my uncle should design me, if we both approve—you understand—my dear, dear Agnes!—my head turns round with the very thought, though indeed Monsieur de Grammont never even distantly hinted such a thing; he is certainly very, very obliging to me; but perhaps all young men of the world have that manner.

16. CAROLINE DE MONTMORENCI.

I have now been here a month; and, next week, many more visitors are expected to arrive. I hope they may not. I am perfectly happy with our present party. —Adieu, my dear friend.

My dear Abbe, in her last letter, says no doubt Monsieur de Montmorenci is perfectly acquainted with the character of the Count de Grammont, with whom you pass so much time, and knows it to be worthy and estimable.

I now agree, a thought has struck me—Suppose my uncle should object to me, I we both approve—you understand—my dear dear Agnes!—my head can't round with the very thought, though indeed Monsieur de Grammont never even distantly hinted such a thing; he is certainly very very obliging to me; but perhaps all young men of the world have that manner.

Benedictine

Benedictine Convent.

YOUR letters, my child, always entertain, but don't in every particular quite satisfy me; you are too open and natural to disguise, that your young heart is highly flattered by the attentions you constantly receive from a young man high in rank and accomplishments; but were those attentions to cease, on the Count de G— to leave your party, would that heart be as much at ease as when it left these walls?— No, Caroline, don't deceive yourself; you would cruelly miss both him and them; stop then in time: by this I do not mean to hint that you have ever done the least improper thing; that your natural modesty and timidity render you utterly incapable of; but now that you will soon have an opportunity, from the enlargement of your circle, endeavour by every means in your power

power to render his attentions general, by which you will shew him you only received them as particularly addressed to you, when there was no other object to claim them; for Mademoiselle de M——, I find by your letters, is but very lately become one of your walking or riding companions. If he ever declares himself, then is the case widely different; but, before he does, or indeed that may never happen, I would not for worlds have him think you are attached to him; a belief the amiability of your manner to any person who shews you attention, will easily inculcate, even without the foundation my anxious eyes have penetrated into. I do not wish that sweet simplicity altered, but I wish the Count de Grammont not to acquire what you will deem a right to your artless gratitude: endeavour then, my lovely Caroline, when the arrival of new visitors gives you an opportunity, to break through those habits of intimacy you must

must naturally have fallen into ; for instance, avoid, if possible, without having the appearance of doing so, always sitting next to him at table ; always having his arm when you walk ; in short, a constant practice of those familiarities whose fetters seem of the slightest materials, whilst, in fact, they are of iron.

You will smile to hear your Abbess talking of the force of love : alas ! had she not felt it, she never would have known that sacred character ! Don't be afraid, Caroline, of following my dictates ; if ever there is a prospect of your being Countess of Grammont, I'll teach you to love again ; but if you are to remain Mademoiselle de Montmorenci, I cannot teach you to hate. — Your five months will appear to me five ages ; this morning as I passed your door from Mattins, a secret impulse made me open it ; to me the room seemed your tomb ;

tomb; your great crucifix caught my eye;
 I fell on my knees, and offered an ardent
 prayer for the welfare of her, whose pure
 ones had so often risen from the same spot.
 —Adieu, my child! May He, whose be-
 nevolence watches our minutest actions,
 guide and influence your's, protect you
 from every evil, and finally receive you in
 the glorious character of a spirit, whose
 task has been well done, into those man-
 sions of eternal bliss, where misery and
 sorrow are known no more!

Chateau

Chateau de Diësbach.

YES, Verneuil, constant yet; you'll certainly recant, and erect a statue to my honour soon; it is not, either, the kind of affection I feel, that I am used to; her gentleness overawes me; I dare not rant and swear; I'll shoot myself, she'd die of it: no, I am obliged to content myself with watching her every motion, seizing every opportunity of offering my services; in short, doing every thing but saying, I love you. Mademoiselle de Montmorenci is a lovely girl too; perhaps more regularly handsome than her cousin; but in Caroline, loveliness, gentleness, and so strong a portion of the *je ne sais quoi*, are united, that though from her timidity her progress may be longer, yet it is surer in attaching than that of any woman I ever met with. You ask me when I leave this;

this; that is a question I am puzzled how to answer; my leave of absence is five months, and Monsieur de Montmorenci wishes me to spend them entirely here; as Edward's is the same, you may be sure much entreaty will not be necessary; but I must for a fortnight visit my aunt, when she returns to Paris. Next week many visitors arrive here; I wish they were in the antipodes, for they will sadly interfere with the present delightful disposition of our time. I wish our regiment would graciously move nearer this quarter of the globe. My Chateau, as you say, is likely to remain deserted this semestre; was Caroline in it, it never should be so, except in her company. Adieu Verneuil.

Chateau

Chateau de Diezbach.

TO-MORROW Agnes, the Baroness de Bavois, and her daughter, come here, and the end of the week many more: last night Louisa came, as she often does, to undress in my room; and after she had sent away her femme de chambre, we drew our chairs to the fire, and entered into an interesting conversation: it related to many of the persons expected here; and of Mademoiselle de Bavois she said, "She is extremely beautiful, and has a thousand good qualities; yet I don't like her, she is so great a flirt, coquetting with every man she meets; she will, till we get new recruits, be sadly off with us; for Edward is engaged, and I don't think, Caroline," added Louisa, "that the Count de Grammont feels himself much more at liberty." This she said with so arch a look it was impossible

impossible to misunderstand her. I will not conceal from you, dear Agnes, that when she said this, I felt a sensation I cannot express; but Agnes, what is coquetting? I know the word, but not exactly what it means, and I do feel particularly anxious to be informed. As I have nothing particular to communicate, I will keep this letter till I have seen Madame de Bavois, and her daughter.

They are come, dear sister Agnes, and Mademoiselle de Bavois is, I must say, most strikingly beautiful, tall, and elegantly formed, with black eyes that almost flash fire; her liveliness is what grave people would call rather in the extreme, and carries her, I have already observed, beyond the bounds strict rules would prescribe. Louisa, who is modesty itself, deems this boldness; but indeed I attribute it to ungoverned vivacity: last night, for instance, when

when we were conducting her to her apartment, she said to Louisa and me, "tomorrow, Mademoiselles de Montmorenci, I expect you will give me a faithful history of all the Knights who sigh for the beauties of this Castle; positively I will know every love affair you have had in it; and, in return, you shall hear my Spa adventures, where my mother thought I positively meant to marry an Italian Count, because I danced with him every night." This, Agnes, is her stile, yet I cannot help feeling much inclined to like her; there is an openness in her manner which pleases me, though I wish, even from the short acquaintance I have had with her, that her vivacity was more restrained; Louisa lives quite in dread of it. The Baron de Bavois was the great friend of my uncle, and he is guardian to Mademoiselle de Bavois; the Baroness has been very handsome, but, *entre nous*, not equal in sense to her personal

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sonal charms; she idolizes her daughter, and has ever suffered her to follow the dictates of an imagination, too young to act unerringly. Inclosed in my dear Abbess's note, I send one addressed to the whole chapter; neither novelty nor absence efface them from my memory; when midnight strikes, I still fancy I hear the cautious footsteps hastening to the choir; and sometimes, if I wake after that hour, the awful sound of distant chaunting still dwells upon my ear: I could run over these affecting recollections till my heart feels ready to escape, and fly back to them: if ever, dear Agnes, I should be unhappy, it would break with the remembrance of my former peaceful days at Bethune. Adieu.

Chateau

Chateau de Diesbach.

THANK you, Verneiul, a thousand times for the books; I received them yesterday in odd company—a number of carnation and orange trees; for Mademoiselle de Montmorenci is extremely fond of flowers, and had not those in perfection; so I ordered my gardener to send me some of the finest from Grammont, not without the hope that they would also be acceptable to the gentle Caroline, whose bouquet I every day collect. If war takes place, though, Verneiul, whatever it may cost me, I for the present bid adieu to love, as it is more than probable our regiment will be ordered to the frontiers. Montmorenci defers his marriage till he is of age, when his father gives him a separate establishment in form; till then his future remains in her convent; they say she is a sweet girl,

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girl, but some devilish etiquette don't allow her being of our party. I almost envy his satisfaction when he receives her letters; one day I asked him who she was like; and he very candidly answered, "not so pretty as Caroline, but exactly her counterpart in manner;" a propos—I must tell you of our acquisitions; the Baroness de Bavois and her daughter, who is most regularly beautiful, and in every sense of the word a girl of spirit; I don't dislike that character, and yet 'tis the very opposite to what I do like in Caroline's! how can I reconcile my inconsistency? The Montmorencis are perpetually covered with blushes at the unguarded sallies of their friend, who takes particular delight in rallying, good-humouredly, Caroline, on her timidity and caution; who, shrinking enchantingly from the innocent war waged against her, offers terms of peace with such a grace, as even disarms the lively adversary,

fary, before she has carried her playful joke to the length she intended. The Baron d'Erlach and his sons came last night, and to own the truth the Chevalier spoilt my rest; he had not been two hours in the room before I read in his eyes he was preparing to love Caroline; young, handsome, and engaging, though not my equal in that vile thing called fortune; he is too formidable to be despised, and has determined me very soon to risk my happiness on one venture: he jockeyed me, and sat by her at supper, helped her with such attention, and saved her from falling as she got up, that, in short, my blood was in a flame, and had he contradicted me upon an almond, I should have knocked him down. Adieu, Verneuil.

Chateau de Diesbach.

DON'T expect a long detail, my dear Charlotte, for I have not time to give one; content yourself with hearing I am well and pleasantly situated in every respect: this Chateau was built in Adam's infancy, I believe, but is spacious and magnificent: the Marquis de Montmorenci and his lady are truly worthy and amiable; Louisa even prettier for her last illness, and every thing that is charming; but the gem of our party is a vestal from the Benedictine convent at Bethune, Caroline de Montmorenci; she is exactly, Charlotte, what you always wished me to be; you would worship her, I am convinced; lovely, without knowing it, and highly accomplished, she is just your model of perfection; then so timid, she blushes if the wind moves her handkerchief; I wish I could be like her, Charlotte,
but

but our natures are different; we scarce seem of the same species; her father was, you know, killed in the famous battle of —; her mother died soon after, and the Dutchess of C—, her grandmother, fulfilled her dying prayers of placing the young Caroline under the care of the Abbess of the Bethune Benedictines; a woman of very high rank and superior understanding, and the bosom friend of the Marchioness de Montmorenci: so, in fact, this is the first flight of the gentle Caroline; for though she used every year to pass two months with her grandmother, the Dutchess, yet the retreat she lived in could only be stiled a second convent; and the present Montmorenci family spent, you know, the last ten years at his government of —, too far distant to allow any personal attentions to his niece: from this hasty account you will judge our situation very much adapted to my taste; but when I talk of

that, I must mention Captain de Montmorenci's friend, the Count de Grammont; he is, Charlotte, what even you would admire; handsome, sensible, and manly; but was I to dwell upon that theme, this epistle would both exceed your patience and my time. Write to me, dear Charlotte, and believe me, affectionately,

Your's,

BAVOIS.

Benedictine

Benedictine Convent.

I Rejoice, my loved Caroline, at the enlargement of your circle, as it gives you an opportunity of practising my advice; but on that subject I shall say no more; conscious that I have awakened your inexperienced mind to a full sense of what is right, the rest I leave, my darling child, to your own prudence, and the strict propriety of your disposition. In proportion as spring renders our garden beautiful, the more I regret your absence, and feel angry with those flowers which blow under your windows, as they strike me with being insensible that you are away. I should not content myself with this short note to you, but am obliged to attend a chapter this morning on some regulations of importance to the convent; so leave sister Agnes to fill up what remains, after assuring my sweet Caroline I love her, if possible, more than ever.

Chateau de Dießbach.

YES, Verneuil, the impetuosity you accuse me of, was truly put to the test yesterday; but don't sermonize. I listened to reason, and was undeceived in time to prevent my exposing myself; but you shall hear——That plague of my peace, the Chevalier d'Erlach continued, as usual, his attentions to Mademoiselle Caroline de M——; and, the night before last, I heard her say to him, "Well, it shall positively be to-morrow—I will not break my promise any more."—This, said in a manner that indicated she meant no other should hear it, tortured my very soul, and determined me to explain myself to her the very first opportunity; or, if one did not offer, to write.—Well, ruminating on this project, I yesterday, after breakfast, sauntered alone in the wood, where I confess the idea of what her promise could be, harraßed my

my mind almost to madness. At length I returned to the chateau; and, turning quickly a corner of the building, I came immediately to the Marquis's dressing-room window, which was open; and at it stood the Chevalier d'Erlach, supporting Caroline, senseless in his arms, while a Monk of the Benedictine order was rubbing her temples with water!—The furies instantly seized my imagination, and presented the incoherent idea of a secret marriage to my heated brain. At one step, I flew in at the window; but, before I could utter a word, d'Erlach exclaimed, "Pray, Monsieur de Grammont, call assistance, or the Abbess's death will cause Mademoiselle Caroline's too:"—This at once opened my eyes, and prevented my impetuous folly. I afterwards learnt that her loved Abbess had suddenly expired in a fit, and that the Benedictine was Confessor of the convent. Coming into this neighbourhood

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bourhood on business, he undertook to lengthen his journey some leagues, and break the dismal intelligence to his young friend; but, though he softened the sad truth as much as possible, she instantly fainted; and d'Erlach, who had been conducted by his guardian angel into the next room, hearing a voice call for help, ran in at the moment I found him as I mentioned; and their mutual distress was increased by not knowing the situation of the bell; the lovely mourner was carried to her room, and has continued there ever since. Mademoiselle de Montmorenci tells me, she is extremely indifferent, and so low it is quite impossible for her to see any body.—D'Erlach provokes me by his dejection: you cannot think how her absence alters the party; every one regrets her; and Mademoiselle de Bavois insists on her fixing a period for indulging her grief, and says, she is very unjustly kept out of her room,

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left her spirits should be too much for her. I regularly send my offering of flowers, and will certainly, Verneuil, follow your advice, and my own inclination, by declaring myself the moment I can. Wish me success; that is wishing me happiness.

Chateau

Chateau de Diesbach.

CAROLINE still continues very indifferent, my dear friend; and we are obliged to go a long-projected party to ———, without her; Mademoiselle de Montmorenci stays too: we are to be absent ten days. I am not in spirits to tell you our arrangements. I go in my phaeton, and take the elder d'Erlach. It is now a fortnight since the Benedictine brought us sorrow, as Mademoiselle de Bavois says; and Caroline has had a slow fever ever since, brought on by agitation. I shall write from ———. Montmorenci set off for Paris yesterday, on account of his promotion.

Chateau.

Chateau de Diefbach.

AGNES! my dear Agnes!—oh, my wandering thoughts!—dead—cold—changed—and I away!—Dear, loved guide of my youth! faithful performer of my parent's last anxious prayer, that you would love and educate their child, thou, too, art gone! and Caroline ignorant of the moment when the iron hand of death grasped thee! perhaps, too, at that very moment, in the height of gaiety, unconscious of the impending blow. Yes, Agnes, you kindly endeavour to persuade me, it was better I should be away at that dreadful hour; but, believe me, I shall never cease regretting that I was: it would have been a satisfaction to me, mournful indeed, to have put up the first prayer for her departed spirit—to have felt the last warmth of her dear hands—to have bathed them with my tears:—In short, a thousand
piercing

piercing recollections overwhelm my mind, agitated by grief and deep regret; yet, in the midst of both, I am truly grateful for Madame de Grignan's very affectionate marks of kindness: assure her how sensible I am of them, and deliver her my inclosed letter, in which I have endeavoured to express myself most thankful, which I really am. My aunt has informed you, that the sudden melancholy intelligence has brought on a return of my faintings. Remont, who attends me, insists upon my being a close prisoner, for at least three weeks, and seeing very few people: he hopes, by this plan of composure, I shall again overcome that distressing weakness, first you know brought on by growing more than my strength would allow; he is quite peremptory; and it is now a fortnight since I have seen any of the gentlemen, except my uncle; for I have been extremely feverish, and agitated by the least thing. Nothing can exceed
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the universal attention that has been shewed me. Thursday the whole party go to ———, where they stay a week. Louisa insists upon remaining with me, and has found a manner of persuading me, she likes that arrangement much better. The lively Bavois insists upon having a party in my room Wednesday evening, and has made the gentlemen draw lots who shall come with her: chance has destined the Count de Grammont, and the eldest d'Erlach, I find, to be my visitors. Write, my dear Agnes; your letters are truly pleasing to me, as they express so well an unfeigned affection, in which we were certainly equals. Don't fear hurting my spirits by dwelling on the grief of the community; every offering to the memory of my second parent, is a source of comfort to my wounded heart.

Chateau

Chateau de Diesbach.

THEY are gone, Agnes, and Louisa and I are in full possession of the chateau; she only consents to my writing to-day, on condition that I confine myself to general subjects, and I have promised so to do,—though I must for a moment dwell on the one nearest my heart, and say that I ardently long for the arrival of the dear packet addressed to me from my loved, my lost friend; pray, my dear Agnes, let me beseech you, since it is too heavy for the post, to take care who you intrust it to; if it should be lost it would be like losing the dear writer again; but now to my promise: Wednesday evening Mademoiselle de Bavois entered my room, leading Monsieur Charles d'Erlach; and when she had presented him to me, she said, “Now, gentle Caroline, if you are sufficiently

ciently composed, I have another gentleman for you; I would not let two come in at once, lest, after living so long with Caps, you should have been quite overpowered." She then went to the door, and introduced the Count de Grammont; indeed, my dear Agnes, it was not fancy, but he was very unlike himself the whole evening; he was in a perpetual absence, renounced every deal, and really seemed to tremble: Monsieur d'Erlach said, "It was a pity black denoted melancholy, as nothing could be so becoming as mourning:" he answered, "the regiment is not to go:" in short, his confused state was so apparent, that Mademoiselle de Bavois said to him, "Own freely, Monsieur de Grammont, whether Monsieur de Montmorenci's wine, or Mademoiselle Caroline's recovery, has deranged your head, for one certainly has." Now, my dear Agnes, I will not conceal from you that my foolish heart ventured

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even to exult at his evident agitation ; what could occasion it, if it was not seeing or leaving me ?—Agnes, if you never loved you cannot judge of what I felt those few fleeting hours he passed with me ! to see him again, and to see his behaviour, so evidently influenced by my presence,—to translate every fault he made into those delightful words—I am thinking of you, Caroline—was a state I should have pronounced of bliss itself, had not piercing recollection continually whispered to my mind—when last you saw him, she was alive ! ah ! Agnes, Agnes ! which are the happiest ; those who feel nothing, or those who feel too much ? Take care of my precious parcel. Adieu.

MADemoiselle

MADEMOISELLE DE BAVOIS TO
MADEMOISELLE DE MONTMO-
RENCI.

HERE we are, dear Louisa, here we are, and any description of mine must fall far short of the beautiful varieties of this place: we every moment lament that you, and the lovely mourning Caroline, are not with us; the Chevalier d'Erlach and I, have a violent disputed point about her; so pray, with my kindest love, desire her to determine it, and on my side: he says he is sure she would not like this place; where, in the morning, people fancy themselves in want of every benefit the salubrious spring can bestow, and, in the evening, dance or game away every good effect they may have received: I say she would enter into the amusements of it with high glee;

glee ; and, if she got a rheumatic partner, endeavour the next dance to avoid a gouty one : he cannot, however, include Madame de Montmorenci in his list of fools, for she drinks the water regularly, and never goes out with us at night ; so my mother is high chaperon, and we go to the public room richer in beaux than any other party. I must say for d'Erlach, he is like the man who said, " mind what I say, not what I do," as he always goes with us. Do answer all our letters the moment you get them, for we are all anxiety to know how, and what you do ; tell Caroline I have not committed above ten follies since we parted : my mother writes you a line in Mademoiselle de Montmorenci's letter. Adieu, dear Recluses.

TO COLONEL DE VERNEIUL.

I

the goodness to give him notice, as it would tilt up; now her father was an old Chevalier de St. Louis, dressed according to the times of Henry the Third, and whose every faculty seemed absorbed in the music; the frolic was too tempting; and the lively girl, whispering me to look at her companion, rose, and at the same moment called out, "Sir, I am going; take care of the bench;" the effect was instant, over went the poor Chevalier on his hands, his wig in one part of the room, and little cane in another; and then the poor soul made such odd efforts to recover himself, that it was impossible to resist, and many burst into a laugh; at that moment, raising his hands, he fervently exclaimed, "May heaven avert even from those who now enjoy my distress, the calamity with which it has been pleased to afflict me—I am entirely blind."—Lightning has not a more sudden effect than had

had these words; a confused murmur was heard through the room, and every creature united in raising Monsieur de St. Hilaire from the ground, and recovering his things; the poor girl, too, coming at that moment, increased the distress of Mademoiselle de Bavois, as his daughter, after what she had said, concluded her father's fall must have happened through accident, or want of readiness to prevent it. He in the kindest manner assured her he was not hurt, while the varying colour in her own face evidently displayed the agitation this accident had occasioned her; Mademoiselle de Bavois, her fine eyes swimming in tears, said every thing sorrow could suggest, and thus ended the affair in the most amicable manner: Mesdames de Bavois and Montmorenci failed not, you may be sure, when we were returned, to expatiate largely on the impropriety of the fault; and when the ladies retired at night, the confounded

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subject

subject was resumed; the Marquis de Montmorenci, who had shrunk from the sight of St. Louis's cross in a ludicrous situation, said, if either of his girls had played such a trick, for he knew the daughter had spoke, he would have made her ask Monsieur de St. Hilaire's pardon on her knees, and have owned to him she did it purposely; this I thought rather severe: young d'Erlach, with warmth, said he much applauded Monsieur de Montmorenci's plan; but, added he, "it will, one may venture to say, always remain in theory, for neither of the ladies alluded to are capable of such a performance; and I'll venture to assert would not, for any consideration, be concerned in a thing that would give a moment's pain, even in private, much less in a public assembly:—that word, *concerned*, I thought glanced at me, and that, perhaps, he had heard what Mademoiselle de Bavois said to me before

she got up ; so I quickly asked, if he alluded to supposing me concerned in the transaction of the morning : he answered, with seeming surprize, that he could not allude to what he never suspected ; but, if it was so, he should certainly not recant his opinion, but even add to it, that want of good breeding, in such a case, argued an equal want of feeling : in short, we both grew warm, and ended the dispute by saying, we would talk it over another time, and hoped we should agree better ; but this was said with a significant look we both understood : the rest of the party had been quite silent, and we soon after separated for the night. I am almost afraid to own to you, that I never went to bed, and at break of day determined to go myself to d'Erlach's room, and make him appoint a time for settling what I deemed, the insults he had offered me ; I went as softly as possible, that I might not disturb the family ; but

judge of my amazement, when, before his door, I discovered the Baron d'Erlach, seated in form in an arm chair; his immense hat on, and dragoon cloak thrown round him; at my approach he rose, and making a sign for me to be silent, took me by the hand, and led me down the back stairs to the garden; when we got there, he addressed me in the following terms, and heated as I was, Verneuil, they sensibly touched me: "You was, no doubt," said he, "Monsieur de Grammont, surprized at finding me where you just now did, but when you have attained my years, you will, perhaps, have learnt that caution never sleeps; seemingly inattentive, I lost not a word of your discourse last night, nor did your reciprocal looks escape me; I judged your designs, and determined to have my share in them; at least you must allow me to picture to you consequences, which, if your breast really possesses the qualities
now

now the subject of contention, you must have silenced its influence by over-ruling its dictates: I will now shortly state the fact—a giddy girl plays a foolish inconsiderate trick, which is made the groundwork of a dispute; to end which you run the hazard of rushing at once into eternity, or rendering a fellow-creature the victim of an hasty decision!—Your life, young man, must have been exemplary indeed, if you feel not the awe of appearing, uncalled, in the presence of your Creator, or, perhaps, of precipitating another into a state of everlasting perdition:—look a little farther:—could you, unmoved, see this aged form bending over the bleeding corpse of my son?—or, on the other hand, the remnant of my days imbittered by the reflection that he murdered you?—and that to satisfy a mistaken notion of honour; real brave men wish their characters to be estimated by the use they are of to society, not by rendering

its laws ferocious: I will even now dispute the glorious honour of mounting a breach, but never shall the sword which has glittered in its country's cause, be sullied with the blood of murder. I will now to the point—let me ask you one simple question, and from your honour, not your spirit, I expect a direct answer:—Had the Count de Grammont, your father, been unhappily afflicted with total blindness; and had any man, for the wit of the thing, thrown him down in the middle of the room where all the strangers assemble, what would you have said?"—"That he was an infamous scoundrel."—Then you imagine, because Monsieur de St. Hilaire was thrown down, and into confusion, by a beautiful girl, that, though he did not see her, his feelings were less acute than had I played him the trick?"—"No; but Mademoiselle de B—— did not know his misfortune:"—there's the case; true feeling never risks: now
you

you would have excused the frolic entirely, had it been played to a person without any visible misfortune; but allow me to ask, the right that subsists for turning into ridicule even the healthiest, happiest stranger one may meet with? and whether, by indulging that dangerous habit, an additional pang may not be given to some heart writhing under the pressure of domestic affliction, or the sting of iron-handed poverty? Monsieur de St. Hilaire is an example that it may; his wife and three children died early victims of a contagious disorder; his eldest daughter never recovered the effects of it, and remains a beauteous wreck of its dreadful power; now Monsieur de Grammont, a mind weakened by these awful shocks, to which is added personal misfortune, is scarce able unmoved to bear the tide of public ridicule.—I saw him endeavour to disperse a tear upon his cheek.”

“ Oh ! Monsieur d'Erlach ! ” —

“ There now, — there now ; — you feel just what you would fight my son for feeling, and for expressing, with warmth, sentiments that never can exist in a cold bosom.”

No, never ; I, at this moment, feel and honour him for them.

I was so overpowered during this conversation, by a variety of sensations, that, scarce knowing where I was, I found myself led by the Baron to the foot of his son's bed, who, at the moment, only seeing me, and guessing my errand, called out, “ O ! its you, Monsieur de Grammont ; I'll be at your service in three minutes ; ” saying this, he was hastily rising, when his father stopped him, adding, “ You need not get up, Charles ; you need not get up ;
Monsieur

Monfieur de Grammont is come to tell you, that he equally, with you, abhors the thought of wounding any mind by the shaft of ridicule; and I, that when you difclose your sentiments to an elegant courtier, you should endeavour to divest them of the rough unpolished garb you cloath them in on your native mountains:” this, of courfe, produced a full explanation to young d’Er- lach; and after reciprocally avowing we both thought ourfelves too warm, we parted in the higheft good humour imaginable; and though I began this letter with abufing my Swifs friend, yet Verneuil, I will fo far facrifice to honour as to own, that pique at his having acted fo fuperior a part to mine, influenced, at that moment, my mind; his conduct too, fince this affair, has been fuch as entitles him to my warmeft efteem; fo evidently delicate in regard to me, that I muft be fenfelefs indeed not to feel the full force of it. Madame de

Montmorenci finds so much benefit from the waters, that her daughter and niece have written to beg her, in the strongest terms, not to hasten home on their accounts; and Monsieur de M—— has so pressingly urged her stay another week, that we shall not return to Diesbach before the tenth. Adieu, Verneuil; direct to me there. I have not time for more.

PART OF THE ABBESS'S PACKET LEFT TO BE
DELIVERED AFTER HER DEATH TO MADE-
MOISELLE CAROLINE DE MONTMORENCI.

ON all the subjects I
have mentioned, my love, you will find so
much better, so much more forcible advice
than mine, from far abler pens, that I should
accuse myself of presumption for having
touched upon them, had I not been
prompted by the self-vanity of believing
the knowledge you have of my heart will
impress with double force on yours, these
last, these sincere offerings of its affection:
but there is one, my Caroline, on which I
have only slightly touched, and now re-
sume; it is the most rigid observance of

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your

your conversation: you cannot, for a moment, imagine I allude to improper themes; those the purity of your own mind will never suffer you to approach; but young people are apt to indulge thoughtless ones, without reflecting on their after consequences: I will give you an instance of the giddiness I mean, by relating a circumstance, the recollection of which, at this remote period, gives me the most painful sensations: speaking, some years ago, of Madame de Verac, Mademoiselle d'Olmancé said, "She is a good sort of woman enough; now and then carried to bed a little chearful:" not long after this Monsieur de Verac separated from her; and though I said nothing, in my own mind I imagined her unhappy foible had, with great reason, disgusted him, and laid the foundation of his ill treatment. She fell into a bad state of health, and was ordered to Pisa, where I then was; and though I made

made a point of paying every attention, in a distant way, her sufferings demanded, yet I strictly avoided forming an intimacy she seemed anxiously to desire, imagining I could derive very little satisfaction from the society of a woman, whose mind could ever have stooped to the vice Mademoiselle d'Olmane had so openly mentioned: she died, and Father de St. Pedro, who attended her in her last moments, came to me a few hours after; "at last," said he, "the child of sorrow is at rest, and beyond the reach of human malice; but I must add, Madame de Verac may justly be considered the prey of defamation and silent grief: her death was truly edifying; she met it with the steady composure of a mind at peace with heaven and itself; a few hours before she breathed her last, she said to me; "Father Pedro, the state you see me in affords an awful lesson of the vicissitude of human life; at my birth a crowd
of

of friends waited the expected, the anxious event; within five and twenty years the same being dies, without one friend, one relation, to receive her last wish—indebted to a total stranger for pious offices at this more awful moment, and closing her eyes the victim of unmerited misfortune!—but now is the power of innocence manifested to my breaking heart; different as are these scenes, I am composed, resigned, and look forward with earnest, with transporting hope, to that moment when every hour of sorrow will be forgot; even Mademoiselle d'Aubigny believes me guilty; assure her I fully forgive her error, but die innocent, and by it have lost innumerable moments of comfort.”—

At this affecting recital I burst into tears, and felt my heart oppressed by the poignancy of self-reproach; I never had heard many of the unfounded accusations

Monfieur

Monsieur de Verac had formed against his wife, as a veil to his own vices, and felt exquisitely hurt that my reserve should have made her think I not only knew, but believed them: even supposing her guilty of the one I had shrunk from, had I known her danger I certainly should have offered every assistance; but as we lived in opposite parts of the town, I had not heard of it before my leaving Pisa for a week, and the day of my return she died. I went back to Paris in the autumn, and one of my first visitors was Mademoiselle de Olmane, who, after the first salutations, exclaimed, "Ah! that poor de Verac, how I pitied her! to die of a broken heart, and away from every friend—but I am sure you was kind to her; do tell me all about it:"—the subject was a tender one, but I answered—

"To

“To say the truth, I saw very little of her from what you told me, for I felt afraid till too late of forming an intimacy.”—

“What did I tell you?”

“That she drank; and you who knew her so intimately, must have been well informed.”

“Mercy, my dear! why you did not believe me sure! I only said it from joke, because she had so very high a colour!”

A variety of sensations here overpowered me, and I instantly fainted: it is unnecessary to repeat Mademoiselle de Olmane's sorrow for the consequences of what she termed a thoughtless assertion; but

but weigh them well, my Caroline, and may they prove an useful lesson: by them I lost the heart-felt satisfaction of alleviating the sufferings of a mind sinking under its load of affliction, and Madame de Verac that of having one friend to enliven her solitude, or soothe her sorrows!

Great events often arise from small causes, and many an heart suffers a deep, a deadly wound, from reports as foundless, and as wantonly sported, as my unthinking friend's; for who troubles himself to trace the origin of a related tale, if the person on whom 'tis founded is a stranger? yet grievous in time may be its effects! heavy may its weight fall on the injured, the indignant, or the oppressed! Elect yourself then, my child, the generous defender of the absent; join not the voices which condemn them, nor arrogate to yourself the
right

right of judging a conduct, whose motives
are unknown to you.

TO SISTER AGNES.

Chateau de Diesbach.

YOU are mistaken, my dear Agnes, in supposing us busied in receiving our travellers. My last was so engrossed by one subject, that I omitted telling you, we jointly intreated my aunt to prolong her stay another week at ———, as her headaches certainly are infinitely better since she has drank the water there; and she has assented to our request. I think, Agnes, I see you smile at my earnestly requesting the party to stay away another week; on some accounts, I confess, I felt myself acting the hypocrite a little; but indeed, when I a moment thought of my aunt's health, I made it from the very bottom of my heart. I will not from you, my dear, my faithful friend, conceal a particle of my weakness,

weakness, (if so I ought to call being irresistibly attached to an object severity itself would bend to), but own that I look forward to his return with an anxiety that amounts almost to agony.—Agnes, if you never loved, you can have no more idea of what I feel, than the poor slave has of the ornament the diamond he hews out, will help to compose ! there is even a luxury in my secret regret for his absence :—I endeavour to recollect the chair he sat in ;—I, morning and evening, visit the trees he sent for from Grammont, and feel angry that they knew him before I did—in short, a thousand incoherencies of this nature :—then the almost certainty that my affection is not unreturned, is next to heaven itself : believe me, Agnes, had I not reason to think that the case, I would not, for an instant, encourage the transporting ideas which now possess my mind :—To be his wife !—his friend !—his Caroline !—my ideas of
earthly

earthly blifs extend no farther : I have not a wifh beyond, except the fruitlefs one, that you could be always with me, and that I could recall from the pitylefs grave, thofe to whom my happinefs was ever dear, to be witneffes and partakers of it with me.— I never talk on this fubject with my loved Louifa; not from want of confidence; but her gentle heart has fo lately writhed under the torture of the death of her deftined hufband, the Chevalier de Courcy, that it would be barbarity to lead her mind to fcenes it perhaps yet dwells on with fatal delight; her fufferings have, indeed, been fevere; you know he was to meet them at Lyons,—and there they did meet him,—but it was his corpf ! !—he was carried off, in three days, by the violence of his fever, in fpite of every medical affiftance. Think, how dreadful, fifter Agnes ! !—Nothing but the tendernefs and true piety of Madame de Montmorenci could have prevented
Louifa's

Louisa's sinking under this tremendous and awful stroke; not that she has, by any means, entirely got over it; but she earnestly endeavours to be resigned. The slow fever that she is so lately recovered from, was the effect of her too-well-founded depression.

The 10th is fixed positively for their return; "Not one hour longer will I stay," my good aunt writes; and adds, she believes the gentlemen with her head was on other shoulders, as their chivalry seems quite offended by being obliged to forsake the damsels of Diefbach so long: I wonder, Agnes, if the Count de Grammont said that.

The eldest d'Erlach, it is very evident, wishes Louisa to allow him poor St. Hilaire's place in her affections; but his endeavours are the most delicate possible; and will, I
sincerely

sincerely hope, in time, succeed.—Adieu, my dear Agnes; assure the whole community, how sensible I am of their kind wishes for my return.—I seem to have soared above myself, when busy fancy pictures my presenting the Count de Grammont, at the well-known grate.—I see every eye fixed upon him—I see him look with affection on those who have so long, so well loved me: in short, I dwell upon this picture, till the happiness seems too great for my imagination; and I hastily snatch a book, and endeavour to attend to subjects far less interesting, really for ease.

TO THE SAME.

Chateau de Diesbach.

I Have have had such a fright, my dear Agnes, that scarce can I hold my pen to give you the relation of it, and endeavour to counterbalance it, by informing you, that Louisa and I are to meet the party on Wednesday, at ———, five leagues from this, where we are to dine, and return here at night. But to my first subject:— In the great hall is a door which goes into the chapel; and I have ever made it a constant rule, morning and night, to offer up my imperfect thanks to our Heavenly Father in it. This morning, I came down at seven, in my dressing-gown; and, according to my usual custom, was kneeling on the last step of the altar, my face covered with my hand, when somebody tapped me on the shoulder. I quickly
4 turned,

turned, and beheld a lovely female figure behind me, entirely dressed in white, who, with the firmest look possible, said to me, laying her hand on my shoulder, "Rely not on the promises of men," and then glided out of the chapel-door, which opens on the lawn, and is unlocked by the gardeners, when they begin to work in the morning. I will not conceal that I was almost petrified by fear, and scarce had strength to regain my room, where I had left Victoire, who, terrified at my trembling appearance, eagerly enquired the cause, and then informed me of a circumstance she only was made acquainted with the evening before,—That the steward's wife had a niece, an actress on the Paris stage, whose beauty allured the most brilliant offers, all which she refused; but a young lieutenant, more artful than the rest, deceived her by a promise of marriage; and she fell a victim to his too well planned

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scheme.

scheme. His desertion of her, soon after, preyed so deeply on her mind, that her intellects became disordered, and she remains in a state of quiet melancholy; sometimes she answers rationally, but soon gets back to a theme never to be erased from her sad breast. She is beautiful, and her aunt has sent for her from Paris, to try if change of air, and perfect quiet, will have any effect towards restoring her wandering senses. They mean to place her with a trusty old woman, who has a cottage a mile from hence, as they properly judge her situation, at present with them, not so eligible, from the number of young, gay visitors at the chateau. She is to go in a few days, till which time, Louisa and I have begged the steward will allow her to saunter about the park, if she likes it, as she is perfectly harmless, and amuses herself with weaving the wild flowers into garlands. When he heard my chapel adventure,

venture,

venture, he meant to confine her totally to the house, till her removal; but I could not bear such a thing, and instantly petitioned for her liberty.——Poor girl!——Oh, Agnes! how I pity her!——But I will leave this melancholy subject, and inform you, Louisa this morning received a letter from my aunt, in which she begs we will set out from hence at nine o'clock Wednesday morning, and she will endeavour to be at —— by the time we are. This request is backed by the whole party; and Mademoiselle de Bavois says, if we are five minutes after them, she shall start the surmise, that the mourner has eloped, when she is sure, *one* face will be the standard for an honest ell of France.

One face, Agnes!—mine was crimson when I read that forcible word, *one*!—You so often enjoin me never to conceal a thought from you, my beloved friend, that

I make no apology for continually recurring to a subject which I own engrosses my almost every thought. When I think of Wednesday, I tremble without knowing why :—I feel afraid, too, that even Victoire will detect me in being more particular than usual, about that silly article, dress. In short, my guilty conscience continually whispers me, that every eye reads the agitation of my heart, which Louisa generously spared, by making no comments on the letter I just now mentioned. Had you, my dear Agnes, but seen his delightful confusion, the evening before the party left this, you would not accuse me of romantically indulging ideas of airy happiness; the most passionate declaration would not have assured me of half so much :—Then, when he took my hand, and said, “ Adieu donc Mademoiselle Caroline ! ”—Never, never shall I forget his look, his voice, his manner——I could point to the very place

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on the wainscot, where his shadow at that moment fell. I have often heard, violent love made people unhappy: I am sure, I don't think so.—Adieu, my dear, dear friend!—Wednesday! Wednesday!

TO THE SAME.

Chateau de Diezbach.

WE all arrived here safe, Wednesday evening, my dear Agnes; my aunt much better than when she went; all the rest well. We dined at ———; no accidents on the road. Poor Annette is moved to Freteau; her subject is always the same; and her figure and manner render her highly interesting. Monsieur de Grammont drove my uncle to ———. Pray, now I think of it, is the new altar-piece put up? I feared the high wind, last night, would break the painted window. A violent head-ach prevents my saying more, than that I am, my dear Agnes, ever yours, most truly and affectionately.

TO

TO THE SAME.

Chateau de Diezbach.

I Am quite hurt to find you are not well, my dear Agnes; pray do take care of yourself; sure, you should not attend matins with your terrible cough. So, Friday, the amiable St. Clair takes her last vows. I used to think with horror upon so sweet a girl's devoting herself to perpetual solitude; but since I have seen poor Annette, and known more of the world, I begin to think she has taken the wisest resolution for her happiness. May she ever find it so, is my fervent prayer!

My aunt has now been at home a fortnight, and has had no return of her complaint. She has, I believe, made it over to me. I am at this moment particularly low; for I have been reading my

revered, my beloved Abbess's last mark of affection, with peculiar attention, weighing every dear word of it, and weeping over remembrances time itself can never erase.

Write to me, my dear Agnes; your letters are one of my greatest pleasures; and I with infinite anxiety wait for your next, that I may hear how you are.

CAROLINE DE MONTMORENCI. 31

TO MADEMOISELLE C—— DE
M——.

Benedictines, Bethune.

MAY you ever, my Caroline, continue as mere a novice in the art of dissimulation as you are at present ! Yes, my dear girl, from the inmost recess of a cloister, I penetrate through a veil you do not know how to adjust : I see you writhing under a sorrow you are at a loss how to reveal ; and the very manner in which you endeavour to lead me from it, points it clearly out to me.. Your letters are confused ; you are distressed for a subject ; you shrink from former ones ; in short, without farther disguise, you are unhappy. Do not think, my love, I mean to reproach you with concealing from me the cause. I fully enter into your feelings of the difficulties at-

tending your bringing yourself to reveal the sufferings of your mind ; but now, my Caroline, that I have fayed you the disagreeable task of beginning a distressing subject, by guessing that your inexperienced hopes were too sanguine, or that your uncle has disapproved them, you surely will have courage to confide to my friendship, what my fears but too well, I doubt, have anticipated. Tell me the real state of your mind, and no longer suffer concealed sorrow to prey upon it. In the world, disappointments in affection are so common, that, were you not a stranger to its duplicities, you would, perhaps, be less shocked than you are likely to be, from finding minds most truly uncongenial to your own.

Write immediately. I am quite well again, and all impatience for you to drop the worldly character of Mademoiselle de
Mont-

Montmorenci, and assume your old one of
the chere Caroline des Benedictines.

All join in most affectionate wishes to
you.

TO SISTER AGNES.

Chateau de Diezbach.

AGNES! my dear Agnes!—Oh! if I could weep upon your bosom—hear your voice—or enter the sacred gate, never more to repass it!—But I am incoherent—I scarce know what I say. If you felt my head, you would pity me—throb, throb, and then so hot!—Forgive me, dear Agnes, forgive my first offence, and believe it could not have lasted long: shame alone occasioned it, not want of confidence. From this moment, never will I conceal a thought from you; your advice shall guide, your tenderness comfort me.—But I will endeavour to be collected, and give you a detail your penetration scarce stands in need of.—On the memorable Wednesday morning, after spending a much longer time than usual

usual in dressing, I went to Louisa's room, and found her not quite ready for breakfast. Agitation and joy had given me much beyond my usual colour. I seemed to tread on air; and every object appeared to me as enlivened as myself. The moment I entered, she said, "Do, Caroline, come here, and let me take a little of your *rouge* off; for nature has made a mistake to-day, and given you my share, added to your own." From not having slept well, she was indeed paler than usual. At nine we set off. Never, in my eyes, did the country look so beautiful! I could not (pity my weakness, dear Agnes), as we drove along, help saying to myself, "I wonder if any body, so truly happy as I feel, ever went over this road before!"——When we entered the gate of ——, I became so violently agitated, that I feared my looks would betray me. At length we reached the grande place; and, at the hotel door, my

my eager eyes instantly discovered my uncle, and the Count de Grammont; the latter, the instant we stopped, opened the chaise-door himself, and handed us out, with every mark of joy at joining us again. My uncle was all affection, and asked Louisa, by what charm she had so soon restored me to health and beauty. To our earnest enquiries after my aunt, and the rest of the party, he answered, they would be there in an hour; but, thinking we should find ourselves awkwardly situated if we arrived first, he had persuaded Monsieur de Grammont to set off with him before the others. We had not been in the house many minutes before several people, in a formal way, called upon my uncle, and cruelly robbed me of an hour I would have purchased at any price; for Monsieur de Grammont, wearied of their compliments and long discussions, said, he would walk round the ramparts, and left us with my uncle
and

and his circle, which was just breaking up. When the carriages drove to the door, we flew down; and the meeting, on all sides, was truly pleasing. My aunt looked amazingly better, and Mademoiselle de Bavois more lovely than I can describe, though she was, at that moment, suffering agony from a pain in her ear, which she got by imprudently sitting in an open window. She was in so much pain, that, after taking a basin of soup, she laid down, saying, she would endeavour to sleep a little, and hoped, by the time we had done dinner, she should be able to join us.

At table, I was placed between the Chevalier d'Erlach and Monsieur de Grammont, who were both in excessive spirits, and gave most humorous descriptions of several characters, and adventures, they had met with at the baths. I will not, my dear Agnes, exhaust your patience by a
more

more minute recital, but proceed to our setting off, which was at seven in the evening. Mademoiselle de Bavois did not join us till near that time, and was then much better. When all was ready, my uncle said, he had so many questions to ask about his grounds, and family affairs, that he declared his intention of monopolizing Louisa and me, and returning in his chaise with us. This my aunt, and Mademoiselle de Bavois, loudly opposed; but, seizing our hands, he carried us off in triumph; the latter saying, she had a great mind to get in too, and sit on his lap, that he might be crowded as much as possible.——Here let me pause, Agnes,—for here——But I will resume presently.——

The evening was one of those delightful ones which misery itself almost enjoys: a gentle shower had given additional freshness to the scene; and every object seemed

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to promote the heavenly temper of mind I was then in;—again to be under the same roof with the man my heart adored,—to wait only his open declaration to make my happiness public.——Agnes, my friend! my comforter! alas! why must we be separated, when I so much stand in need of your assistance?

We had got about a league from ———, when Monsieur de Grammont and young d'Erlach passed us in the farmer's phaeton: "Those gentlemen," said my uncle, "when they recounted their adventures at dinner, left out one they were near treating us with."

"What was that?" said Louisa.

"A duel."

"A duel!!" we both exclaimed.

"Yes,—

"Yes,—they quarrelled about some silly prank of that giddy girl Bavois, and would have fought the next morning, had not the old Baron once more mounted guard, and way-laid them: however, 'tis an ill wind that blows no-body good; for Grammont has been her declared lover ever since."

A knife, dear Agnes, plunged into my bosom, would have hurt me less than the conclusion of my uncle's speech,—“Her declared lover!”—At those words, my heart gave so violent a bound, that I thought I should have fainted; my respiration seemed stopped, and alternate flushes of heat and cold came over me. My eyes were still pursuing the figure of Monsieur de Grammont, when those fatal words caught my ear. They still continued fixed on the same object, but with what a sudden transition of sensation!—That coat, those buttons, that hat—all, whispered my tortured

tured fancy, have heard him vow everlasting affection! As if a veil had been forcibly torn from my eyes, I in an instant saw both the past and future; how much I had deceived myself, and the misery which awaited me. I dared not trust myself to speak, scarce even to breathe, lest I should betray the violent emotions of my harrowed mind. At length, my uncle having finished the story of their dispute, which I was too confused to collect, summoned all my fortitude, by taking my hand, and saying, "Indeed, Cary, to say the truth, I thought his taste widely different;—but, never mind, my love; he will, perhaps, have first reason to repent."——Here I was nearly overcome, and began to falter out, "Indeed, Sir, I have no right, none at all, to think;"——when the dear Louisa, as if she read my bosom, and felt another turn was wanted to the subject, said, "As to Caroline, she sees so many perfections in Mademoiselle

Mademoiselle de Bavois, that, I am clear, she at this moment thinks Monsieur de Grammont far inferior to her; as to me, I differ, and think he will be miserable in less than three months: it is the only point we ever dispute upon."

This speech gave me time to rally; and I spoke upon the subject with infinitely more composure than I had dared hope for. Every object now awakened some new pang:——But a few hours before, how different a being they beheld me;—then at the summit of bliss,—now almost convulsed with agony!

Before ten, we reached Diesbach; and, the moment I could, I stole away to my room, and threw myself in a chair, in a confusion of thought impossible for me to describe, or you to imagine! Suddenly starting from my absorbed state, I exclaimed,

claimed, "All yet is safe, Caroline! Agnes alone knows a secret which never more must pass this tortured bosom; and, from this moment, be every care exerted to prevent the dangerous suspicion that it ever was harboured there." Concealing an aching heart under the smiles of cheerfulness, I then went to the drawing-room.—When I opened the door, Mademoiselle de Bavois faced me, with the Count de Grammont leaning over the back of her chair, and looking, Agnes,—yes, looking unutterable things.—This was my first trial; and a difficult one it was.—A cold sweat came over my forehead; and I was ready to fall with giddiness: however, I determined not to give way to the least degree of outward weakness, so immediately went up to her, and enquired how her pain was. He answered for her, that he was sure it was very bad.—How long I could have stood this conversation,

I will

I will not answer ; but supper being announced, most fortunately relieved me from it.

Now, Agnes, I have laid open my bosom to you, and never more will I leave you to guess a thought in it.——Ah ! St. Clair, St. Clair ! how enviable is your lot, to that of the wretched Caroline !—Peace and piety attend your steps ; misery and self-reproach, her's !

The horrors of the night I passed on our return here, I will not dwell on, lest I relapse into them in this more conspicuous hour.

Write, my dear friend, immediately to me, in whose eyes every object in nature seems changed, except your friendship.

TO

TO THE SAME.

Chateau de Diezbach.

INDEED, my dear Agnes, you are unjust to Monsieur de Grammont; indeed you are; it is now too evident he never loved me; and surely he ought not to be condemned because my foolish inexperienced heart thought he did; it was merely kindness, politeness, and friendship, I took for affection; and if these were more particularly paid to me, it was because he passed more time with me than with Louisa, for you know she was long confined to her room: after we came here, too late, alas! I am become wise, I now plainly see the difference between esteem and love; yes, Agnes, struggling with inward grief, I am obliged to assume composure, and see him watching her every look and motion, flying

before her smallest wish, and inanimate but in her presence! You conjure me to return; but that, my dear friend, I cannot, must not do; then indeed would my fatal weakness be easily discovered; no, rather would I sink under the pangs I endure, than ever suffer it to be suspected! At night, when Victoire leaves me, I often lay my hand on my bosom, and exclaim, now Caroline, this day's task is done! and indeed I then seem to have laid down a weighty, weighty burthen.

Yesterday Monsieur de Courcy came here; he is to stay some time; before he came, my uncle very properly guarded us against leading to any very melancholy subjects, as some years ago, he says, his friend met with family misfortunes he has never overcome; there is certainly, Agnes, a sympathy which attaches the children of sorrow to each other; I was prepared
to

to like Monsieur de Courcy before I saw him, but his appearance made a deeper impression upon me than I can describe; he is not more than fifty, extremely good looking, and well bred; he always wears mourning, and at times seems lost in deep and solemn thought; he is remarkably sensible, and there is a benignity in his manner and countenance that invites confidence while it inspires respect. Adieu, my dear, dear friend; think of me often, and join your prayers with mine, that I may once more regain that peace of mind I now so anxiously regret.

TO COLONEL DE VERNEIUL.

Chateau de Diezbach.

YOU have the black art at command, Verneiul, and if you are too severe with me, I'll impeach you, and you'll be burnt; that's all: but to be serious, you shall now have a full and true account of every thing I have concealed from you; for to tell the honest truth, till you broke the ice by guessing a little, faith I dared not venture on the subject; and now I feel before you somewhat in the culprit stile, but shall begin by pleading not guilty, and trust that will be your verdict. I need not remind you of the impression Mademoiselle Caroline de Montmorenci made on my mind at my first arrival here; so strong was it, that I beheld unmoved the striking beauty of Mademoiselle de Bavois; yet in
my

my love for the mild Caroline, there was something I was totally unused to; it was not that restless violence of passion I had felt before; her modest reserve fed me not with the smallest advance; for her manner was so ingenious, artless, and relying, that I dared not mention love, lest I should terrify her into constraint; things were in this state when Madame de Bavois and her daughter came, to whose sprightly manner, and ever-flowing spirits, I almost dared attribute levity and forwardness; so very different was she from Caroline, that loving the one, it was almost impossible to admire the other.

D'Erlach, at length, roused me from my dream of security; his attentions were so manifest, that I determined to lose no time in openly declaring myself, when the sudden death of the Abbess at Bethune, put a stop at that moment to my intentions; still I

was easy, for the confinement of the dear afflicted girl removed her from d'Erlach as well as from me ; and I firmly resolved upon seizing the first moment of her recovery for my intended purpose. Now, Verneuil, at least let my present candour plead for me with you, and do not be severe with me, for my mind is not sufficiently settled to bear reflections, I feel conscious what the sequel of this letter will suggest to your moralizing mind :—to resume, Caroline was confined with a slow fever three weeks ; and, during that time, I insensibly fell into more familiar habits with Mademoiselle de Bavois ; I painted, walked, and rode with her ; and, in short, like the attracted moth, I hovered round till I fell before the flame, and my heart confessed the triumph of Mademoiselle de Bavois, over the impression made upon it by the artless graces of Mademoiselle de Montmorenci ; I will confess to you, I fancied

fancied I could read in the fine eyes of the former, that I was not indifferent to her, and in her manner I found a warmth, an energy, so suited to my own, that I do not scruple pronouncing she is the woman formed to make me happy: as if ashamed in some degree of my seeming fickleness, whilst I congratulated myself on not having declared my love to Caroline, I yet avoided doing so to Mademoiselle de Bayois, and at this period our excursion to the baths took place; the day before, at desert, the latter came round to all the gentlemen, with a hat filled with bits of paper, and made us each take one; on opening them the elder d'Erlach and I found prize written on ours, upon which she declared us duly elected to the honour of passing the evening with Mademoiselle Caroline de Montmorenci: a fortnight before, Verneuil, I would have purchased that privilege with kingdoms; at that moment, I will confess, I

would have paid the same price to have declined it: I felt as if she would read my heart, and reproach me with inconstancy: how inconsistent! when she was ignorant it ever had been hers!—We went; but not even my coward anticipation of our meeting equalled the feelings it inspired me with! to my eyes she appeared more charming than ever; her mourning dress, ~~her gentle melancholy in that her whole~~ manner, all conspired to add to my inward confusion, which at length became so outwardly apparent, that Mademoiselle de Bavois, and d'Erlach, took notice of it several times; I renounced, threw down the cards, answered yes for no, and played the fool in every thing most naturally: not till we were coming away did I recollect I had taken my usual offering of a bouquet; then I presented it too, after having worn it myself the whole evening! Never did she receive one from me with
so

so animated, so engaging a look; at least my evil genius, at that moment, whispered me so; but I am very willing to allow the effect of my perturbed fancy: at nine we left her, and d'Erlach said, in infinitely better spirits than when we went, and during the whole supper, he feasted his brother's ears with her praises: in this wavering unsettled state we went to —, where, in one moment, every dormant ember burst into a flame, and fixed, irrevocably fixed, my determination for life: it was two days after the silly adventure I mentioned to you of the breakfast, when I found Mademoiselle de Bavois alone, and her eyes evidently swelled with crying; even you, Verneuil, are not, I believe, philosopher enough to stand unmoved the sight of a loved object in distress: you may judge then I most eagerly enquired the cause; to which she only answered by her tears; at last, upon my swearing I

would find it out, she hid her face, and said: "Oh! Monsieur de Grammont, the mischief I might have occasioned! had you killed your friend! or, oh! heavens! had you been killed!" Those last words were pronounced with such an energy, and agony of expression, that I could resist no longer, but warmly declared sentiments I had so long concealed in my foolish wavering mind; nay, more, Verneuil, I was transported beyond bliss, by a confession from the loveliest of women, that my love was not without return, and a permission to speak to her mother on the subject, as soon as we got back to Diesbach; you need not ask me whether I have neglected that part of our discourse; you know my impetuosity too well: a week after this we left —, and Mademoiselle de M——, and her cousin, met us five leagues from hence, where we dined; I will own to you I felt awkward that day; Caroline was the blushing, blooming

blooming figure of modesty, and my silly heart felt——; what did it feel? It surely was not love, but a warmth of friendship certainly allowable to so much amiable merit. Now, my friend, you have my history, and I must add a few notes to it: to begin;—you are not to imagine, because I have dwelt so much on my former sentiments for the gentle Caroline, that I have to reproach myself with having acted dishonorably towards her; no, she never knew I possessed them, for never, never did they pass my lips to her; and I now find that I even mistook them myself; but I would not conceal from you the most private thought of my mind, to prove to you that I could not even quit a delusion I had cherished, so lightly as the character of inconstant, which you have so often bestowed upon me, might lead you to suppose. Adieu, penetrating, moralizing, and sincere friend.

COLONEL DE VERNEIUL TO THE COUNT
DE GRAMMONT.

BY throwing yourself on my mercy,
de Grammont, you chain my pen; so I
have no more to say than that the weather
is fine, and the country beautiful. Your
conscience urges me not to condemn—
mine refuses to approve.

Yours.

TO

TO COLONEL DE VERNEIUL.

Chateau de Diesbach.

YOUR billet, Verneiul, contained more than pages could have done; I see you condemn me, and think I have acted improperly; I cannot bear the idea; once more then let me remind you, that I never once declared myself the lover of Mademoiselle Caroline de Montmorenci; that she was totally ignorant of the passion I fancied I felt for her; and what surely must calm your every doubt, seems perfectly insensible to my avowed attachment to the lovely Bavois; nay, was so from the first moment she discovered it, which was not till our return from the Baths. I will not deny that I suffered something at our first meeting at ———, where we dined, and own I was obliged to force more than

usual spirits the whole time of dinner, lest my confusion should be discovered; not so with Caroline; her spirits are infinitely better than ever I saw them, and she behaves to Mademoiselle de Bavois in a manner which clearly proves she never considered her as a rival; this makes me truly happy; for to have given her one uneasy moment, on my account, would really have made me wretched: do then, my friend, complete that happiness by acquitting me of having behaved ungenerously to a woman, whose virtues claim the highest regard; tell me openly why and where you condemn me, and give me an opportunity of regaining in your mind the confidence you have so long reposed in me, and resume the right mine gave you to criticise my conduct with the penetrating eye of a true friend.

TO SISTER AGNES.

Chateau de Dießbach.

YOUR truly affectionate letters, my dear friend, are my almost only comfort, for nothing now amuses my wretched mind: I wish to fly even from myself, for am I not a despicable character? Do I not consecrate every hour to dissimulation; and have I not wantonly sacrificed my peace to a phantom! oh! Agnes! Agnes! where are now those peaceful hours when the chearful heart of your Caroline knew no wish beyond your sacred walls? Alas! gone! for ever gone—and my loved Abbess too——cruel, cruel Memory!—

But I will endeavour to be composed,
and give you some account of what has
passed

passed since my last: the night of the day I wrote to you, just as Victoire was leaving me, Mademoiselle de Bavois came to my door, and asked if I would admit so disorderly a visitor; she was in her night cloaths, and told me she had dismissed her femme de chambre, on purpose to have a long tête à tête with me; I thanked her, and as soon as Victoire was gone, she laughingly said, "I am come, dear Caroline, to tell you a secret, and as we all consider you half a saint, ask your advice;—in few words, I have had a brilliant proposal; can you guess from whence?"—"I think I can;"—(pity me now, dear Agnes)—"'Tis neither from the Pope, nor King of Spain, but even from the Count de Grammont, and I have given him leave to speak to my mother tomorrow.—Now, Caroline, as you have known him longer than I have, do candidly tell me whether you know any thing that

ought to influence me against so hasty a decision for my happiness through life: Does he game? Does he drink? Will he murder me if I look at another man? In short, I am convinced you have not been under the same roof with him so long, without having penetrated his character, and I entreat your opinion of it: tell me whether in my place you would accept him, and give me some advice how to become a grave matron, for my mother esteems you a model of propriety:" Agnes! my friend, my comforter! weigh but this speech, and judge of my agonized feelings!—In one moment every doubt brought to a certainty;—and the task of recommending Monsieur de Grammont as a proper husband imposed upon me! Agitated as I was, the frankness of Mademoiselle de Bavois charmed me; and, as I surveyed her lovely figure, my heart but too fully felt and owned its irresistible power:

power: happily she was too much engrossed by her subject to attend to the various changes of my countenance; and finding my agitation escaped her, I endeavoured to rally every remaining spark of fortitude, and reply to the questions she had so openly asked. I need not trouble you with what I said: alas! what was there to say, but that he was every thing the most romantic wish could form! After dwelling with a delight which racked my very soul, on the future happy state she promises herself, Mademoiselle de Bavois left me, desiring me to acquaint Louisa with the subject of our conference, and invite her to assist, at our next sitting, the following night; she then embraced me, and wished me good repose: may her every future wish be crowned with a success the reverse of that one! Indeed I fought it not; I was in that temper of mind when we endeavour to forge a subject to avoid
recurring

recurring to one that is painful;—I tried to read, to write, to think of Annette, yet all would not do; at length I threw myself on a couch, and, overpowered by fatigue of spirits, fell asleep; then, Agnes, did cruel fancy haunt me with the happy figures of the Count and Countess de Grammont; they seemed to be gliding by me, but stopped at seeing my distress; confused, I started from this dream of agony, and as soon as it was light, went down into the park, where the freshness of the morning, and the loveliness of every surrounding object, in some degree composed my wandering mind. I went to Louisa's apartment before breakfast, and with a studied composure, executed Mademoiselle de Bavois's commission: we agreed that, as soon as breakfast was over, we would walk to see poor Annette, that we might be out of the way in case Mademoiselle de Bavois should wish a private conference

conference with her daughter; accordingly we did, and on our return found my uncle and aunt, Madame and Mademoiselle de Bavois, with the Count de Grammont, were in the library; and my uncle had given strict orders not to be interrupted: how my foolish heart beat as I passed the door! had it opened at that instant, I am sure I should have fainted: in the drawing room we found the d'Erlachs, and Monsieur de Courcy; the old Baron could not resist the subject; but, pointing to the library windows, "those panes," said he, "are now witnesses of Grammont's happiness or misery; for, without sorcery, it is not difficult to imagine the motives of his calling so chosen a privy council; nay, Mademoiselle Caroline, you look as serious as if it was a court-martial trying him for his life."—"Mademoiselle Caroline," replied Monsieur de Courcy, "is perhaps, like me, at this moment looking to the future

future, and 'tis an awful contemplation!" Much more, Agnes, was said on this subject by all parties, except myself: wholly unable to enter on one so truly awful to me, I endeavoured to finish the outline of a drawing, at least I seemed to be so doing, and by that means avoided exhibiting a countenance, over which I vainly endeavoured to throw the veil of tranquillity. I dared not leave the room, lest I should awaken suspicion, and, like the poor mariner who escapes the wreck, only to be cast upon a desert shore; I was released from my then painful state, to be plunged into one infinitely more so, by the arrival of Mademoiselle de Bavois and Monsieur de Grammont: I dared not raise my eyes, but the Baroness soon obliged me to summons every faculty, by saying, "I should think myself unworthy the polite attention and esteem this society have honoured me and my daughter with, if I
did

did not seize the first moment to inform them her future fate has been this morning fixed; Monsieur de Grammont has honoured her with his choice, and I beg leave to present him as my future son-in-law." I felt I must not allow myself one moment's reflection; so, rising, I instantly joined mine to the other congratulations, and, in the confusion of voices, my faltering speech was happily drowned. ~~my whole~~ frame was so agitated by this violent exertion, that I was obliged to resume my seat to save myself from falling; nor did I dare move till every one of the party retired to dress for dinner; then I ventured to escape, and gained my own apartment happily alone. Oh! Agnes! never will the confusion of ideas which then presented themselves, ever be erased from my wretched bosom! As if, till then, a shadow of hope had remained, I felt the world as a dreary solitude before me; I
 shrunk

shrink from the future, nor dared to review the past:—but why do I dwell on a theme which agonizes my very soul?—Rather let me, in a few words, sum up the dreadful whole, and endeavour to overcome my weakness: overcome it!—how easy those words are to write! But to return; the Baroness and her daughter go to Paris in a fortnight, for a month; I need not add the Count de Grammont follows them; they then return here, and are to be married—Agnes, I must leave you for a little——

My head is better, and I will now endeavour to finish.—My uncle has persuaded Monsieur de Grammont to take a house at ———, our nearest town, you know, for the remainder of his semestre; before that time expires they will visit Grammont, and then go wherever his regiment may be ordered.

The d'Erlach's leave us next week; but, to my great joy, Monsieur de Courcy stays some time longer; the more I know of him, the better I like him; his mind, softened by misfortune, wonderfully accords with mine; I seem attached to him by a secret tie, and when he looks earnestly at me, fancy he penetrates my secret thoughts, and reads the misery engraved upon my heart.

It is now three months, my dear faithful friend, since I received a parting blessing from those lips which never more will pronounce one; since I left Bethune, and plunged into a world where woe awaited me! how changed, how sadly changed, is your Caroline since that fatal period!—Never shall I cease to remember the moment I beheld that dear form for the last time! She held my hand till the sacred gate was quite open, when, pressing her
veil

veil to her face, she tried to speak, but in faltering accents exclaiming, "I cannot!"—she hastily turned away; and the gate instantly closing, hid her for ever from my streaming eyes!—What a train of reflections follow that bitter recollection!—

Edward returns to-morrow; he owes his promotion to the Marshal de ———, his intended bride's father, with whom he has been during his absence from this place; she was there upon the occasion, and he always mentions her in his letters in so affectionate and pleasing a manner, that there is every prospect of their being truly happy: Louisa will not allow that Monsieur de Grammont has the same chance; she says there is a violence in the disposition of Mademoiselle de Bavois, he will perhaps discover too late; I really never saw any thing of it, and must think

Louisa

Louisa much prejudiced against her: how incomprehensible it is, Agnes, that I should be her strong advocate! yet it certainly is so.

Adieu, my dear, dear friend; assure the Abbess and whole community of my affectionate regards, and continue to me your heart-soothing consolation and advice.

COLONEL

COLONEL DE VERNEIUL TO THE
COUNT DE GRAMMONT.

YOU have released me, Grammont, from a very painful reserve, and I shall, without scruple, use your permission to speak freely my sentiments on your late conduct; which, in my opinion, has been culpable in the highest degree! You see I do not mean to flatter you; true friendship is above the fear of offending; nay, will even run the certain risk of it, rather than descend to the unpardonable weakness of approving, where it ought to condemn.

You assure me your change of affection has not, in the smallest degree, hurt the first object of it; but I should wish for some better evidence of that fact, than

G

merely

merely her not telling you so, which certainly, did she outwardly appear affected, would be so doing in the most effectual manner; not that I can aver she is; but, if the heart of Mademoiselle Caroline de Montmorenci is at liberty, and could unmoved withstand the incessant and particular attentions of the handsome, accomplished, insinuating Count de Grammont, I will venture to assert, it is made of colder materials than any other woman's in Europe; but even supposing her engaged, which is highly improbable, you are not the less culpable; you thought her not so, and certainly tried every means in your power to attach her to you; then you see a face more strikingly beautiful, and bid her adieu for ever! Mention not your never having declared your love; 'tis a subterfuge the impetuosity of a new passion could alone induce you to use; in any point of view, your conduct has wantonly

only risked rendering an amiable and lovely girl wretched; for, having believed you honorable and sincere, how are you certain that, chearful as you see Mademoiselle de Montmorenci in public, her private moments may not be devoted to secret grief? I ever must have my doubts on this subject; for whatever time may discover, it is going too far to suppose you will ever reveal to me, that my reproaches were well founded: this, however, is the last time I shall allow myself to touch on so delicate a subject; nor can I leave it without assuring you, that no disrespect for Mademoiselle de Bavois, who I have not the honour of knowing, urged me to enter upon it, but the anxious desire of proving myself your true friend, by pointing out those parts of your conduct a less sincere one would pass over in accommodating silence.

THE COUNT DE GRAMMONT TO
COLONEL DE VERNEIUL.

DEVOTED to secret grief, Verneiul! the very idea froze my blood! No, my friend, believe me, I have every reason to suppose that the charming Caroline never felt an uneasy moment on my account; I almost indeed may say, I am certain of it; for she is too artless to be able so well to dissemble; and I will confess to you, I was inconsistent enough to feel hurt, when she congratulated me with ease on my approaching marriage; nay more, I solemnly promise you, if ever I discover she thought of me in any other light than as a friend, I will reveal it to you, with every circumstance.

Edward

Edward is come home; I informed him of my future plans, and he rather drily said, "I wish you happy;" he is not fond of compliments, or I should have thought him abrupt.

I really now, Henry, do feel a truly happy man; beloved by the woman I adore, and surrounded by my friends, if you was of the party my every wish would be complete: I have taken a very pretty house, for a short time, at ———, and have sent for some of my servants to Grammont, where I shall conduct my lovely bride some time in September. We are to be at Paris on Thursday the 17th; pray don't leave it before that time.

TO SISTER AGNES.

IT is now past two o'clock, Agnes ; but I am so agitated with a scene I have just gone through, that I need not attempt to sleep ; so will converse with you, and relate it :—

Since the approaching marriage has been settled, Louisa often observed to me, that she thought Mademoiselle de Bavois shewed an excess of liveliness and joy, scarce consistent with delicacy. I excused her by attributing her behaviour to her natural flow of high spirits, not likely to be depressed by the prospect of being united to the Count de Grammont ; but yesterday, she was, Agnes, the very reverse of her former self ; pale, low, and absent. Her alteration struck the whole party. She complained of a violent pain in her head, and passed the

the greatest part of the day in her own room. Monsieur de Grammont was all anxiety and attention. He endeavoured to read; but his eyes with eagerness watched every opening of the door, in hopes it would be her, returning; for she joined us several times, but retired again, in that seeming restless state when the mind is unable to settle on any particular object.— I blush to own, even to you, my dear friend, that I was unable to stand the fond solicitude of Monsieur de Grammont, and was going through the great hall to get into the park, when Mademoiselle de Bavois's maid met me, and gave me a small note, in which were these words:—

“ I shall come to you, dear Caroline, when every body is gone to bed, as I have something to say; so expect me.”

Accordingly she came; and you will better judge, than I can describe my feelings at the following narration:—

“ You have, no doubt, my dear friend, perceived that I have been extremely unwell to-day; and, to confess the truth, my appearance has been more occasioned by agitation than illness, and that on a subject I scarce dare confide even to you; but you must make great allowances for me: you know I am as giddy and imprudent as you are gentle and discreet. The fact is this:—Soon after my mother took me from the convent where I was educated, she presented me to Madame de C——, at whose assembly I constantly met the Chevalier de Valmont, who declared himself my ardent admirer. Except the Count de Grammont, he is the handsomest man I ever saw, but, I am sorry to say, has the character of a complete free-thinker, as well

well as liver. The instant my mother perceived his attention to me, she insisted I should not encourage it, alledging his known character as an invincible obstacle to her ever approving him. Now, Caroline, you will scream with horror.— Outwardly, I obeyed my mother; but, I blush to own, permitted him to write to me, and even see me, without her knowledge. In short, he became my passionate lover; and I will not deny, that, at that time, I really felt partial to him. Our leaving Paris, for some time, put a stop to our correspondence; but it was not long before he found means to convey a letter to me; which was followed by several others, filled with the most passionate expressions of attachment, and hopes that in time he should be able to overcome my mother's objections, which I had communicated to him. Things were thus situated when we left Madame de Beaumont's,

mont's, and went to my mother's chateau at Paissy; which is now more than three months; and though the same method of continuing our correspondence remained open, yet, during that time, I never heard from him once, and I had written last to him. Pique, I will confess, first led me to encourage the attentions of the Count de Grammont: but soon, Caroline, I found that I was mistaken when I fancied I loved Monsieur de Valmont; for insensibly the former gained the whole of my affections; and I but too clearly perceived the difference between really loving, or believing one does so. My mind was quite easy in regard to the Chevalier de Valmont. If I thought of him, it was with a mixture of pique and pride, that left little room for tenderness. About a fortnight ago, I sent to my milliner in Paris, for several things, and, among others, for floss silk to work with. I received all according to my orders,

orders, but was rather surprized to find the silk wound : however, in her note, I found Madame le Brun explained that matter, by saying it would work so much better for being so ; and advising me, by all means, even to wind it again, and to do it myself, as it required the greatest care. Wanting the silk, I immediately began to follow her directions ; but, judge of my surprize when I found the middle of the ball was formed of a letter from the Chevalier de Valmont !——Happily I was alone, and will confess to you, the contents of it occasioned the agitation you witnessed. He informs me, that a violent fever, which was followed by the small-pox, imposed on him so painful a silence, that the first instant of his recovery he dedicates to assure me of his unabated passion. He adds, “ I rise from this illness, I thank God, an altered man. I have seen death near ; and the awful impression will, I trust, be never

effaced. Suffer me to write upon the subject to your mother; and, be assured, my future conduct shall be as well regulated as sincere repentance and love can make it. How grateful ought I to be, even to my cruel disorder, which has left my heart and face unchanged, but totally reversed my mind."

Here Mademoiselle de Bavois melted into tears.—Recovering, she said, "Do not imagine, Caroline, that I am again relapsing into fondness for the Chevalier de Valmont; but it is impossible to hear, unmoved, the sufferings of an object one has ever felt a degree of attachment for. This you will learn when you have loved, (Oh! Agnes, Agnes!—at that moment——.) Besides, only conceive the difficulty of my situation.—However, I have written to him, and wish much for your opinion of my letter, as my head is really so confused

I dare not trust it alone on so important an affair."

She then read me her answer, in which she urged her mother's will, and said every thing the peculiarity of her situation required. We altered a few phrases, and made a clear copy for her to follow the next day; after which, she thanked me a thousand and a thousand times, and then left me, a prey to the most agitating reflections!—Sure, Agnes, he deserves more than a love first bestowed from pique; she has, even now, but a divided heart to offer; for Mademoiselle de Bavois deceives herself, if she fancies the Chevalier de Valmont has lost every interest in her's.—But I will leave this distressing subject, not however before I conjure you to destroy this letter instantly, as it contains a secret not my own, and you must be fully aware of its consequence to my friend; from you
I could

I could not conceal it, as I am determined never to do an act, or harbour a thought, that may not be imparted to you, who are my guide and support, surrounded as I am by affliction. Even Louisa is ignorant of the above event; and I entreated Mademoiselle de Bavois to bury the whole for ever in her own bosom.

Last night, to relieve my weary mind, I walked out on the lawn by moon-light, and, at the end of an avenue, met Monsieur de Courcy, who was standing with his arms folded, seemingly in deep contemplation. When he saw me, he said,—

“ I am, Mademoiselle Caroline, so much the child of fancy, that I never look at the moon without reflecting how various are the lots of the many who at that moment behold it, and wishing that its gentle influence could impart peace to every bosom
its

its beams fall upon. At this instant, perhaps, the eye sparkling with the joy of prosperity, and that dimmed by the tears of affliction, are alike fixed upon it: but alas! how different are the sensations it excites!—to the one, presenting images of future bliss; to the other, harrowing recollections!—Perhaps, too, at this moment, it gilds the marble which records———Oh! Charlotte, Charlotte!”———Here, striking his forehead with his hand, he hastily walked down the avenue where I first found him; and, in a few moments, the thickness of the shade hid him from my view. Certainly, Agnes, some secret, deep grief preys upon his mind: was he younger, I should think it was love, and that he was a rejected lover; for the Baron d’Erlach said, the other day, he thought his memory failed him much; and, laughing, added, he believed they cheated him, and that the water
they

they gave him for Seltzer, was that of Lethe. "Was that the case," replied Monsieur de Courcy, eagerly, "I would purchase a draught of you with my fortune!" His exclaiming, "Oh! Charlotte, Charlotte!" when the idea of the tomb struck him, leads me to imagine it contains the object of his solemn regret. Whatever the cause of his sorrow may be, I own it doubly endears him to me. This will, indeed, Agnes, be a letter of confidences; for I have yet to inform you, that, since my last, the Chevalier d'Erlach took an opportunity of declaring, it was in my power to make him the happiest man alive. With as much delicacy as possible, I even refused him leave to hope that time would make any alteration in my sentiments, which were, I need not add to you, the very opposite to every wish of his. No, Agnes, I will not join guilt to imprudence. I am already humbled enough in
my

my own eyes: the smallest addition would crush me quite. Edward returned a fortnight ago. My uncle would never have the intended marriage mentioned in any of our letters, that he might enjoy his surprise. When he arrived, my uncle, aunt, Louisa and I were in the library; and, after all affectionate enquiries were over, my uncle bid him guess the two persons of the party who were, before such a time, to be married.—Looking earnestly at me, Edward steadily answered, “Yes, Sir, without forcery, I can name them both.”—“What!” exclaimed my uncle, quite thrown off his guard, “You knew, then, Grammont loved Mademoiselle de Bavois.”

“Mademoiselle de Bavois! impossible! However, my dear father, by dropping your secret, you have enabled me to guard mine; for I certainly did not mean her.”

Never.

Never, dear Agnes, was her form more welcome to my eyes than at that moment, as, by her entrance, she put an end to a conversation that was to me excruciating. I dare not trust myself to think of Edward's piercing look——Sure, he could not penetrate, through my confusion, a fatal secret I live in torture to conceal.——But I will not add to my misery by surmising the worst; but flatter myself the efforts I made to appear unconcerned, were attended with success.——Adieu, my valuable friend!—When next we meet, perhaps, it may be to part no more till that awful moment when every worldly care shall vanish, and this aching bosom rest, at last, in peace!

FROM

FROM THE PRIOR OF THE CARTHU-
SIANS, AT ———, TO THE COUNT
DE GRAMMONT.

Carthusian Convent.

DEAR NEPHEW,

YOUR affectionate letter gave me the most sincere pleasure; and I hasten to answer it, that you may be assured I feel the most lively interest in whatever concerns your happiness. Though the last fifty years have found me dead to every earthly vanity, this breast has not forgot to feel real joy at the prosperity of the good; and I trust you may with justice be ranked in that class.—When your father, my nephew, informed me of his intended marriage, he added, “If my uncle has not forgot even the name of such an institution.” I had not, nor have I even now; so far from it, that I shall presume
to.

to declare to you my sentiments upon the solemn, the important state you are now going to enter :—

I consider marriage as the happiest, as well as most respectable one in this transitory world, where both parties unite in fulfilling the duties of it, according to the vows made before the Almighty.—But alas ! how few, how very few are they who seriously reflect upon them when once made ! and how many, may I not without severity add, consider them as mere words of form, sanctioned by custom, and neglected without crime !—Beware, nephew, of those dangerous precepts ; for, be assured that the God who hears you confirm your engagements by calling upon his Holy Name, will, at a future, but certain period, present to your eyes a full, a strict account of the manner in which you have performed them ; and that, before a tribunal whose

whose every sentence is irrevocable, and every decree just. I perfectly agree with those who assert, that, where minds are not kindred, true happiness is never to be found; but, surely, that point should be well ascertained before so momentous an engagement is concluded, and not left to be determined by a chance that may cast a cloud over every future prospect. You have now known Mademoiselle de Bavois long enough to be fully sensible of the power of her charms and accomplishments; and I doubt not but you are also as well persuaded that her temper and mind are calculated to render you happy; and that, not upon slight grounds; for, believe me, a time will come, when beauty not only loses its lustre, but its charm. Not so with the more solid perfections. A man must be a brute indeed, who can efface from his memory, scenes where the sense, the piety, and the goodness of his wife, have shone
con-

conspicuous,—where, by her gentleness, she has softened his adversity, and, by her prudence, heightened his joy.—De Courcy, who is now of your party, is, you know, my intimate friend, and often relieves a sorrow too deeply rooted ever to be totally erased, by conversing with me by letters, and frequently mentions a Mademoiselle Caroline de Montmorenci, as a model of feminine gentleness and beauty. As my intended niece is her friend, I trust they have a similitude of manner and disposition; for I have learnt no more of the latter from him, than that she is as handsome as an object he once remembers—and that I can never forget!—By a trusty hand, you will next week receive a diamond cross: present it, from me, to your intended bride; and, through life, may the reverse of her fate for whom it was originally designed, be the Countess de Grammont's!

To Him whose power and mercy are alike infinite, I incessantly recommend you, praying that you may so fill your station in this life, as to look forward with well-founded hope of a glorious reward in that to come!

TO

TO SISTER AGNES.

Chateau de Diesbach.

'TIS in vain, Agnes, to try to find composure: every object rends it from me; and every hour brings with it some new misery!—Sure the faculties of my ears and eyes are doubled; for, let me be ever so intently occupied, not the smallest of his attentions escapes me; and then, novice in dissimulation, I am ever on the eve of discovery from over-acting my part. At dinner, for example, Monsieur de Grammont offered to help me to a dish I have an unconquerable aversion to, and I accepted, lest he should construe my refusal into pique.—Then, some days ago, I walked so far, because he proposed it, that, on my return, I instantly fainted. In short, I ever am exactly the contrary of what I appear.—

Dreadful

Dreadful state! to know myself so contemptible, and yet unable to reform!—— If you knew my feelings, Agnes——such a weight in my bosom——Then, when his eyes are fixed on her, scarce daring to breathe, or reduced to the necessity of saying some foolish thing, not daring to trust my silent looks!——But I really am quite incoherent, yet have a great deal to tell you, and of poor Monsieur de Courcy too. Yesterday, he, Mademoiselle de Bavois, Monsieur de Grammont and I, were sitting together, when the post came in, and a servant brought Mademoiselle de B—— a letter.—She hastily read it; and, bursting into a flood of tears, exclaimed, “Heavens! how very dreadful! I am quite miserable! Oh, if I had the power——.” Various were the emotions these exclamations excited.—Monsieur de Grammont seized her hand, and entreated her to inform him of the cause of her affliction.—I sat in agony, expecting

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some

some unhappy thing had befallen the Chevalier de Valmont,—while the benevolent de Courcy, approaching her, said, in the most earnest manner,—

“ If money, Mademoiselle de Bavois, or the little interest I have, could assist :—— my only pleasure now is being useful to the unfortunatè !”

“ Oh no,——nothing can,——’tis all over !”

“ Some fatal accident, I fear.”

“ Yes, my mother’s neighbour, the Baron de Rancy, has shot my dog, because, he said, he hunted his deer !——shot him dead !——can any thing be more shocking ?——was there ever any thing more terrible ? ! !”

With

With a look I never can forget, in which were blended disappointment and awful solemnity,—

“Yes,” returned Monsieur de Courcy, “I shot my wife!!” then, striking his forehead with his hand, he hastily left the room.

You will easily judge the effect this speech had on the company present.--- Mademoiselle de Bavois, whose natural good sense is only veiled by her impetuosity, blushed at having misapplied such forcible expressions; and even Monsieur de Grammont was at a loss how to offer consolation with such a contrast before his eyes.—My uncle has since related the melancholy affair to us:—Monsieur de Courcy was married to a young, beautiful, and amiable woman, whom he tenderly loved. One day, trying an English pistol

In his park, he fired at the pale, from behind which, some hours afterwards, the body of Madame de Courcy was brought home, found shot through the heart, as she was gathering herbs to make a medicine for a violent cold he had.—The shock was so great as, for many years, to deprive him of reason, and has impressed him with a melancholy, neither time nor change of scene can divert. He frequently goes with me to see poor Annette, and listens to her wild sorrows, till his heart overflows with them.—How I pity and respect him!

Monday next, dear Agnes,—Monday next, they leave us.—I know 'tis unpardonable; but the still being near him---the seeing---hearing---watching him, yet have charms for me I cannot tear away:---but yesterday, a circumstance occurred that brought back distracting recollections:---My uncle and I were in the green-house
when

when Pierre, the gardener, brought me a key, and giving it me, said, "This, Mademoiselle, will let you in at any time; and it is a superfluous one to me: I had it made for the Count de Grammont, when he used, every morning, to make a nosegay of his own flowers; but now he never uses it."——When he *used*,---Agnes, those words were a dagger in my bosom.——But I will no longer make you dwell on the hacknied subject of my weakness.---Adieu, dear Agnes,---the very idea that you sometimes think of me, is one of my greatest comforts.

They stay a month. I will not write till they return, and employ that interval in endeavouring to gain strength of mind sufficient to finish my part with *eclat*.

TO THE SAME.

Chateau de Diezbach.

IT is now five weeks since I wrote to you, my dear friend : would I could add, I have employed that time in a satisfactory manner to myself!——But, alas ! just the contrary ; I shrink from the day of their return, with a weakness I blush for, but cannot subdue. To-morrow is that day ; and I would purchase a further respite at any price.

When Monsieur de Grammont left this, he requested my aunt would take the trouble to look at the house he has taken at ———, to see that his orders, relative to the furniture, were executed : we have been several times ; and I must leave you to judge the share of fortitude I have been obliged

obliged to assume upon those trying occasions. Yesterday, Louisa, Monsieur de Courcy and I, walked to see Annette. She had not been well; and when she suffers, her misfortunes recur with additional violence to her disordered mind. Anselm, her uncle, was with her; and she was leaning her head on his shoulder. When we entered, she resumed her discourse; and, fixing her eyes wildly upon him, "You don't understand," said she, "that he offered me two garlands; the snow-drops felt cold, and I took the roses—but the thorns—Oh! the thorns were sad indeed—my head bled; and they hurt me here too," putting her hand to her heart. Tears filled good Anselm's eyes,—“This, Sir,” said he, “is the child I fondly hoped would be the comfort of my age; and every thing promised it: but, unfortunately, we suffered her to pass a winter with her father's sister; and her she may truly

reproach with this misery: she persuaded her not to return to a solitary life, but try the effect of her beauty, by exhibiting it on the stage:—This we fervently opposed; and, influenced by those who now abandon her, she abandoned us; which was surely wrong; but now, she is wretched, lost, and deserted, I feel she is my child again!!” “Your sentiments,” returned Monsieur de Courcy, with admiration, “are those of true religion, and, in every hour of adversity, will be their own reward.”—This scene truly affected us all; and we walked home in a melancholy silence, that but too well accorded with the feelings of my heart.

’Tis now twelve o’clock, dear Agnes; another hour begins that day I so much dread!—My uncle proposed meeting them; but Edward, I thought rather warmly, opposed it. There certainly is some

coolness between him and the Count de Grammont.—I dare not think on that subject.—Adieu till to-morrow night.

Agitated, and lower than you possibly can conceive, dear Agnes, I now resume:—Madame de Bavois, and her daughter, arrived to dinner; the Count de Grammont not till the evening. Nothing could exceed the agitation of my spirits at that moment, nor the beauty of his happy destined bride. Unusual joy animated both their countenances; and every expression but fear, left mine, when, embracing me in the kindest manner, she said, “My dear Caroline, what have they done to you? you don’t look well: come to me, when I am a grave matron, and don’t spend your life in hearing de Courcy preach.”—Nor did I look less culpable, when Monsieur de Grammont, presenting me with a pearl necklace, said, “Mademoiselle Caroline, I

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trust,

trust, will do an old friend the honour of accepting this trifle, in commemoration of the happiest event in his life :”—And the most mournful of hers, he might have added !——That event, as he termed it, takes place Thursday fortnight.---What a day for me, Agnes !---With what sensations do I look back to the time when the convent walls bounded my every wish !----How gently soothing is your sensible, your friendly advice !---Believe me, dear Agnes, I feel unworthy of so inestimable a friendship as your’s is ; for, ought I not to profit more by it, and follow its judicious dictates ?----Adieu, my dear Agnes !---I shall scarce have time to write to you before I send you an account how I acquit myself in my hour of trial.

THE COUNT DE GRAMMONT TO
COLONEL DE VERNEIUL.

I Will, at least, de Verneiul, force you to allow me one good quality---strict observance of my word, by acquainting you with circumstances I would give mines not to have known:---yes, my friend, with horror I write it, the gentle Caroline loves me!!—As if the malice of fate had reserved itself for the last two days, in that time the truth flashed upon me, and has entirely clouded the pure happiness I thought myself within reach of.---The first circumstance that occurred was this:---A question was started,--*Which, of all others, was the trial hardest to bear?*---Some said, loss of parents; others, friends or fortune; but a gentleman present, said, “Certainly,

disappointed love." The amiable Caroline was then so seated, that I alone had a full view of her face; and, at those words, how varied were the emotions of it!---alternately she turned red and pale; and her hand shook so much, that the direction she was writing was scarce legible.---Still a hope remained; and as I surveyed with astonishment her changing countenance, I accused myself of presumption for supposing I caused it: but, too soon, every doubt was cleared, and the comfort of uncertainty vanished.

Next to my room is a closet which looks into the chapel, for the conveniency of any of the family who may be ill; and, last night late, and my mind not at ease, I went into it; and the first object that struck my view was Mademoiselle Caroline de Montmorenci, kneeling on the altar steps. After a considerable time spent in fervent prayer, she

she arose in tears ; and, as she went out, putting her hand on her heart, she exclaimed, " Thursday ! Thursday !---Oh ! my God, that day support me !"

There needed Verneuil no farther evidence of the true state of her mind : it has impressed mine with sensations I should in vain attempt to describe, and must strenuously endeavour to conceal. A thousand circumstances now present themselves to my imagination, which ought before to have opened my eyes ; but now, alas ! too late am I convinced of what, some months ago, would have made me the happiest of men !---I dare not dwell upon the subject---'tis followed by too many piercing recollections.---Thus, then, with having performed my solemn promise, I dismiss it for ever.---Adieu !

TO SISTER AGNES.

Chateau de Diesbach.

'TIS over, Agnes, the dreaded day is over; and I think I feel easier; 'twas a dreadful task, my dear friend, to perform, that of being present at the awful, and, to me, tremendous ceremony;--at it I performed a part too,--that of secretly offering to consecrate my future days to meditation and a holy life;---yes, from that moment, I abjured a world which from henceforth to me must be a dreary blank, and which hitherto has been a path of sorrow: not that I mean at present to communicate my intentions to my uncle or aunt; my mind is too much weakened to bear discussing so important a point; but, when I re-enter your peaceful walls, then I shall communicate my future plans.——

But

But to return to Thursday:---The ceremony was performed in the chapel; and envy itself must have allowed the Count and Countess de Grammont perfect models of beauty and elegance. Louisa and I were bride-maids, dressed alike in white crape; and on our heads, simple bandeaus of white roses; mine was truly poor Annette's; for I felt the thorns, as she described. I dare say it was my fancy,---but Monsieur de Grammont seemed to watch my looks with the most accurate attention;---yet, why should he?---'twas certainly conscience made me think so.---After dinner, accompanied by Madame de Bavois, they left us; and though, my dear friend, we shall no doubt see them as often as possible during my uncle's farther stay of six weeks at Diesbach, yet I mean to avoid, in future, a subject not only painful, but which would now be culpable. In six weeks, we shall meet again!---would we had

had never parted, dear Agnes!---My aunt is affectionately pressing for me to remain entirely with them; but, finding me so resolutely anxious to return to Bethune, kindly promises to drop the subject till another year. I own, I wish we were not to be separated by an hundred leagues; and, much as my heart is fixed on Bethune, I shall not, without lively sorrow, part with my truly kind and affectionate family; and am scarce able to think of the moment when the dear amiable Louisa is to leave me; for our plans are thus settled, that we may be as long as possible together. As our routes are directly opposite, the family set off from this the 20th, and Monsieur de Courcy and I leave it the next day. He is so kind as to take charge of me, as he must pass Bethune to return.---Adieu, dear Agnes!---That you may not be under the smallest doubt, I shall write you a line the night before
our

our departure, as the post will much precede us; for Monsieur de Courcy travels with his own horses.—Adieu, my dear friend!—Deliver the inclosed to the good Abbess.

TO SISTER AGNES.

Chateau de Diesbach.

SCARCE, Agnes, can my trembling hand guide my pen to inform you, I leave Diesbach to-morrow at ten o'clock; the family went this morning, and I will not attempt to detail to you our parting scene; 'twas truly affecting; and when Louisa came to embrace me the last time, I fainted, for it really was too much for my spirits. Your imagination can scarce paint to you, my dear friend, the day I have passed, indulging, if I may use the expression, a luxury of woe, visiting every room, and retracing every accident that had happened in them—piercing—piercing task!—the embers still glowed in my aunt's dressing room, and rendered dear to me by having been useful to her; I watched their

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dying

dying away with an anxiety I cannot express:—I visited too, Agnes, the very spot where Monsieur de Grammont exclaimed, “sure she is not to be a Nun!”—This once only will I resume a subject I had abjured; every tree, every leaf awakened a painful recollection; I endeavoured to remember those I looked at, at the moment he spoke, the spot he stood on——ah! Agnes, Agnes, is this my summoned fortitude?—Louisa and I went yesterday to Annette; we told her we were going, to see if it would make any impression; but she only looked wildly at us, and said, “they’ll look very pretty, you know, when the snow is on the ground; and nobody will tread upon them; they’ll know all the garlands are for him.” Poor Annette! thy fair form is a wreck, which ought to caution others against the shoals of vice!

The

The Count and Countess de Grammont left ——— ten days ago; Louisa and I spent the last week with them; such a week, Agnes, to me!—An incident happened during our stay which gave me infinite uneasiness: one night, at supper, Monsieur de Grammont said, he found it necessary to alter his intended plan of staying two months at Paris, before he went to Grammont, but that he would return there as soon as possible. Madame de Grammont, whose heart is fixed upon a gay and splendid appearance at Paris, opposed the alteration with more warmth than I wished; but there the matter rested, and we separated for the night. My spirits were so indifferent, I endeavoured to compose them by reading; and was much surprised, at an hour when I thought every one of the family must have been in bed, to hear persons repeatedly passing in the gallery before my room; the noise increased.

creased so much, that I opened my door to know if any thing was the matter, when the first object I saw was the Count de Grammont, en robe de chambre, passing hastily along; he looked wildly at me, and went on; I now distinctly heard Madame de Grammont screaming violently; and, no longer able to restrain myself, flew to her room, where I found her held down on a couch, in violent hysterics!—You will easily judge how shocked I was; but doubly so, when her maid said to me:

“ ’Tis always so, Ma’am, with my mistress after a passion, and she has been in a sad one.”

It seems the unfortunate Paris subject had been resumed, and discussed with so much warmth as to occasion the scene I have related; and though it ended by my persuading her to own herself in the wrong, yet,

yet, from that moment, I traced a visible alteration in the Count de Grammont; a forced gaiety, but inward dejection; as if, too late, he had found out what he even never slightly suspected. Edward and Louisa stile themselves true prophets; for it was impossible to keep this affair from being far too public. Adieu, dear Agnes; in less than four days we shall again meet! It would inspire you with melancholy to see Monsieur de Courcy and me, alone occupying the great drawing-room, lately so differently filled.

AS the correspondence here ceased for two years, it is necessary to inform the reader of the principal incidents which took place during that period.—The Marquis de Montmorenci, and family, returned to the province of which he was Governor;

Governor; and, by affairs of consequence, was prevented returning to Diesbach the ensuing year. Mademoiselle Caroline de Montmorenci anxiously wished to take the veil at Bethune; but as, on account of her youth, several years must have passed before she could take her last vows, sister Agnes entreated her to wait a longer period before she began her noviciate, that she might be certain of the settled determination of her mind. The temper of the Countess de Grammont shewing itself daily more and more, without reserve, rendered her, at length, so unpleasing to the Count, that he repeatedly declared his intention of separating from her; which determination was hastened by a letter of the Countess's to the Chevalier de Valmont, which fell into the hands of Monsieur de Grammont, and but too fully proved that he had long been the dupe of their artful management: he instantly insisted upon
her

her returning to her mother, or chusing a convent for her future residence; she preferred the former; and Madame de Bavois, almost broken-hearted at her daughter's disgrace, retired from the world to lead, with her, a life of solitude and retreat, hoping to make her fully sensible of her former errors. The Count, miserable at remaining in a country where every object renewed some melancholy reflection, changed from his regiment to take the command of one ordered to the West Indies, from whence the correspondence continues.—Many former letters do not appear.

FROM

FROM THE COUNT DE GRAMMONT
TO COLONEL DE VERNEIUL.

'TIS now just two years, my dear friend, since I thought myself the happiest of men; and now what am I?—The most wretched!—In vain you endeavour to comfort my afflicted mind; it is oppressed by sorrow too poignant to admit relief, and too just to be complained of. From the instant I discovered the real disposition of her I called my wife, the whole of my affection for the gentle, the elegant Caroline returned; for now I feel I really loved her, when I suffered my accursed wavering fancy to be caught by a more volatile and capricious beauty; but dearly have I paid, and dearly do I pay, for the guilt, the inconsistency of my conduct; disgusted with every thing at home, and suffering from

ill health abroad, my situation is truly pitiable: I can no longer support it here; and have written for leave to return in April. Then the torturing surmises that haunt me, relative to the dear object of my regret;—whether she is at her uncle's; at the convent, or married;—distraction!—I—I hope not!—Ungenerous wretch!—I am ready to exclaim at myself: 'tis truly singular I can never learn the least particular concerning her: I am almost provoked with your answer; you don't know the family; what then, cannot your tongue utter an enquiry, because you are not personally acquainted with the object of it?—A guilty conscience, de Verneuil, is always irritable; I need not say mine is both. Edward has entirely dropped all correspondence; therefore pride forbids my appealing to him: and that king of fools, de Rancy, wrote me a letter, in which he says, he enquired after Made-
moiselle

moiselle Caroline de Montmorenci, when he was at the meeting of the states of Brittany, and found she was not with the Marquis. Did you ever receive so satisfactory an account? Could I have got at him, I certainly would have rammed the letter down his throat. By a private hand I send you an enormous packet, containing an account of all political matters here; this small sheet I totally dedicate to my private griefs, unfit indeed to be mixed with any other subject!

Adieu, my friend: if I get leave to return, you will hear from me next only when I land, as I shall instantly embark.

TO COLONEL DE VERNEIUL.

Marseilles.

I Landed an hour ago, my dear friend; and if I look forward to any thing with pure satisfaction, 'tis to the moment of meeting you again. A thousand undecipherable sensations assailed me the moment my foot touched the shore; a thousand bitter reflections tore my mind!—Once more then, Verneiul, am I in the same country where I have experienced every extreme of bliss and woe, and where, within a week, I could, if I chose it, see an object my every thought hovers round; presuming her still at Bethune, or Diesbach, I left the regiment in excellent health and spirits; and, dead as I am to most pleasures, I could not be insensible to the flattering marks of regret on my quitting them

them with which they honoured me ; and which nothing less than health should have influenced me to do.

I have this moment received an invitation to sup at the governor's ; his son and I were at the Ecole Militaire together, and the instant he heard of my arrival, sent to intreat I would come to him, as he is unhappily still confined with the consequences of a terrible broken leg. As there is no post from hence to-night, I will keep this letter open, that, if I hear any thing worth communicating, you may have it.

Three o'Clock.

Worth communicating ! ah ! my cautious friend, in spite of every precaution, the truth, the whole truth, has flashed upon me in a moment ! You need no longer

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protest

protest your ignorance from the kind wish
 of saving me pain; I know the whole;
 I have heard particulars; I scarce could
 fit to hear, and my mind is racked:—
 distracted with self-reproach and guilt!—
 for have I not rendered her guilty too?—
 Guilty of vowing affection which she has
 not to bestow; for I know too well the
 consistency of her mind to think she can
 so soon have totally changed, after the
 various times in which, to my penetrating
 eye alone, her heart betrayed itself, after
 the memorable chapel scene: one moment
 I dare reproach her—the next myself!—
 In short, my brain is on fire!—happy,
 happy d'Erlach!

The way I learnt what you have so
 studiously concealed was this:—I asked
 d'Orvilliers by what accident he met with
 so terrible a fracture, for he yet suffers
 extremely; and he told me, that, being in
 garrison

garrison at Dijon, he was one day trying a new horse near that town, which being naturally vicious, and taking fright at something, threw him with extreme violence; that a young officer, who was passing in a chaise, immediately stopped, and with the assistance of his servant, got him into it, and not only conveyed him back to Dijon, but staid with him during the operation of setting his leg, and many hours afterwards: "I have every reason," added d'Orvilliers, "to be most infinitely obliged to him, for every moment he spent with me was precious, as he was then on his way to Bethune, where his mistress was, whom he shortly after married; perhaps you know him, de Grammont; his name is d'Erlach; and he married Mademoiselle de Montmorenci, who was, I found, at Bethune."——Know him! Heaven and earth!——I must leave this subject, my friend;—I cannot dwell upon it:—an idea strikes me; I will go

round by Diesbach; and, if they are not there, find a melancholy satisfaction in indulging my grief, by reviewing objects which must recall every subject of it in the most lively manner. Adieu, de Verneuil; do not fail to meet me next month in Paris; if I stop any time in the village of Diesbach, you shall hear from me.

THE COUNT DE GRAMMONT TO
COLONEL DE VERNEIUL.

Paris.

YOUR letter, my dear friend, has awakened me from a state of almost insensibility : but why don't you come ? Is that devilish steward of yours to forge new delays every hour ?

You might well imagine me embarked again from my silence ; but you would cease to wonder, if you knew what I have suffered in body and mind since my last ; to say agony, is far too faint ; but you shall judge :—I before mentioned to you my intention of visiting Dießbach, which I put into execution : I arrived at the village about twelve, and was so anxious to get within sight of the chateau, that I sent my

I 5 carriage

carriage and servants on to the inn, and turned up the well-known avenue alone: by many of the windows being shut, I judged none of the family were there, and entered the great court, oppressed with sensations impossible to describe; for some moments I stood like a statue, surveying every object once so familiar to me; and should have remained much longer in that state, had I not been roused from it by the appearance of a maid-servant, who was crossing from the lodge to the house: I immediately enquired if any of the family were there, and whether the good old housekeeper was alive, and at home: she told me the family had been gone a month, that the housekeeper was visiting a sick person; but if I would go in, and wait a little, I should be sure of seeing her; or if I would walk in the gardens; the latter offer I gladly accepted; and asked if, without inconvenience, I might go through a suite
of

of rooms, at the end of which was the orangery; she said, certainly; and conducted me through them: fifty times, de Verneuil, I thought I should have fallen at her feet; my sensations were perfect agony; and when we came to the great drawing-room, I was obliged to feign a pain in my side, as an excuse for sitting down; one window only was open, but that gave sufficient light for me to discover objects which racked my very soul!—the very instrument at which, the figure of innocence and loveliness, used to sing her favourite hymn to the virgin——the table where she painted——in short, every thing united to awaken cruel recollections!—All those accomplishments, all those charms now presented themselves as the happy d'Erlach's, and I inwardly cursed the moment he became sensible of their power.—I really must have looked ill, for my conductress insisted on fetching me a glass of water; and,

during her absence, I meditated how I might gently touch on the subject my heart was wrapped up in; for I felt I could not bear a full investigation: she soon returned, and I carelessly, after thanking her for her attention, said:—

“ Monsieur and Madame d’Erlach are with the family, I think.”—

“ Yes, Sir; they left this with them, and were here almost the whole time they were: how handsome Madame is! she looked like an angel! When dressed all in white she came into the great hall, where the villagers were assembled to offer her their best wishes; and then Monsieur looked at her with such eyes! he worships the very ground she treads on!—One day I met them in the park; she was leaning on his arm, and the freshness of the air had given her a colour like a rose; so Monsieur

fieur says to me, Mary, you, and Madame d'Erlach use the same rouge ; and he wiped her cheek with his hand."

This harrowing narration would have lasted till now, without any interruption from me, for the furies of jealousy seized my brain, and I dared not open my lips lest I should betray the agitation of my mind, had not the girl, seeing me look with evident wildness, exclaimed:—

"Lord, Sir! You are surely in great pain; your face quite flushes again."

I said I really was; but the air would relieve me, for I felt oppressed; upon which she opened the garden door of that room, and I anxiously seized the moment of ending a conversation that drove me to madness.

To

To avoid being seen in the agitated state I was in I plunged into a small wood near the house ; but, as if attracted by a magnet, I felt an irresistible impulse to hover round every, every place which most reminded me of former scenes ; guided by that wish, I found myself close to the greenhouse, the door of which was open, and my old friend, Pierre, the Gardener, in it ; he was amazed, and rejoiced at seeing me again ; and, after the kindest enquiries, begged I would walk to the other end, that I might see the care he had taken of my trees.

“ You will wonder, Sir,” said he, “ at seeing every one here stripped of their flowers ; but I cut them all for our dear Mademoiselle Caroline ; and had I had thousands, she should have had them.”

“ What

"What then the ceremony was performed here?"

"Yes, Sir."

"And by whom?"

"Our venerable old curate; but indeed, Sir, 'twas almost too much for him; he was so much interested in whatever concerned her, and had been her father's great friend: he commanded himself as long as he could; but, at last, his voice failed, and he burst into tears; indeed there was not a dry eye in the village."

"He doubted then her happiness"—

"O, no! if ever woman was happy, she is; but it was a grievous sight to see so much beauty, youth, and goodness, so early consigned to the grave."

"The

"The grave!"——I screamed out, for I did not speak the word; "What! is not she married to the Chevalier d'Erlach?"

"Would it was so, Sir; but she has been dead two months, and is buried here in the family vault."——

I cannot go on, my friend—you shall hear from me when I am more composed.—
Adieu.

TO THE SAME.

Paris.

SHE is gone then, de Verneuil! for ever gone, and I have killed her!—
Distraction!—I scarce believe my senses; but I will endeavour to relate to you the particulars I collected at Diesbach: Pierre had no sooner uttered those awful words, “she is dead,” than, as if awed by the dignity of the subject, I, by an involuntary motion, took off my hat, and stood like a fixed statue against the wall:—those who have never loved can have but a faint idea of the sensation felt on hearing of the death of a beloved object:—Caroline, so lately present to my eyes as a blooming bride; now lay before them a pallid corpse! I felt the cold dew of death upon her forehead—I saw the last look of her closing
eye

eye—oh! Henry, Henry—may you never
 ——but you never can feel what I did;
 regret, remorse, guilt, Hell itself was in
 my breast.

Pierre, terrified at my appearance, wished
 to call for help; but I again pleaded the
 illness I had so lately covered my agitation
 with, and telling him air was the only thing
 to relieve me, I plunged into the wood,
 while he went to the house to see if Saunier
 was come back; he soon returned with her,
 and she insisted on my going instantly to
 her room, that she might give me a cordial
 she knew would be of service; I complied;
 and after the good old woman had expressed
 her joy at seeing me once more, “Alas!
 Sir,” said she, “Pierre tells me you never
 heard of our terrible loss; I’m sure it al-
 most broke my heart; little did I think,
 when I was present at her birth, that I
 should also witness her death!—Here a
 shower.

shower of tears interrupted her speech, and I summoned fortitude sufficient to beg she would give me a more minute detail of that terrible event.

“You remember, Sir,” said she, “when the dear girl first came from Bethune, where I used regularly to visit her once a year, as well and gay as youth and happiness could make her.—Well, some months after that, I fancied her spirits drooped, and she did not look so well as usual; for, as I went at all times to her room, I had more frequent opportunities of observing her; but she never would own that she was ill, and laughed at me for my fears. This went on till you all parted, and she returned to her convent. My master could not leave Brittany the spring following, but wrote to me, charging me not to omit my usual visit to Bethune: I went; but words cannot tell how shocked
I was

I was at Mademoiselle Caroline's altered appearance. Pale and weak she came to me at the grate; and her spirits were so overcome, she shed a torrent of tears at seeing me. She said, her uncle and aunt much pressed her to join them; but added, smiling, "you will oppose that, Saunier; for, you'd expect me to die on the road."— I staid at Bethune a fortnight, and, during that time, saw her great friend sister Agnes alone; and she told me, she had, unknown to Mademoiselle Caroline, written an account of her health to my master and mistress; and in June they arrived here, and immediately went to Bethune, where they staid eleven weeks, as they did not think it proper to take their niece from under the eye of a very skilful physician there. At the end of that time, they were obliged to go to Paris, but took a house at Bethune for the winter, to which they came in November; and there Monsieur d'Erlach.

d'Erlach married Mademoiselle de Montmorenci. Soon after, change of air was advised for dear Mademoiselle Caroline; and they all came here; but nothing was of service: she every day grew weaker and weaker; and, three weeks after their return, died in the arms of the afflicted Madame d'Erlach.—My master had been obliged to go to the meeting of the States; and, as soon as the melancholy funeral was over, the rest of the family followed him to Brittany. You can have no idea, Sir, of the calmness, patience, and resignation of the dear departed angel;—and so collected! she remembered every thing, and every body!—she often mentioned you, and circumstances that had happened when the large party of you all was here; nay, the very night before she died, I was sitting with her alone, and she said to me, “Saunier, don't you often think where your absent friends can be, at the moment
you

you speak of them?—I wonder, now, where Monsieur de Grammont is—I hope he thinks I have felt sorry for his domestic unhappiness.”----You will excuse, I hope, Sir, my mentioning this.”-----

Think of me, de Verneuil, at this recital. I will not attempt a description of what I felt, dear injured girl!-----But dearly---yes, dearly do I pay for my too guilty conduct!----But now, what avails repentance?---I am wretched, and she is no more!-----

The good old Saunier seemed gratified at seeing me so affected, and continued:---

“ Ah, Sir! I knew how hurt you would be, and, I’m sure, if you had seen the funeral, never---no, never would you have forgotten it!---At the first toll of the bell, my mistress fainted; and as to Madame d’Erlach,

d'Erlach, she was almost senseless. The corpse was carried into the great hall, the night before; and it would have moved a heart of stone to have seen the poor people crying round it: poor Annette, too, seemed to understand she was dead; for, the next morning, though the whole place was strewed with flowers, she brought a long wreath of them; and, laying it on the coffin, said, "Now, that must go with her too:---I have no more to give."

Had Mademoiselle Caroline any idea of her own danger?

"Yes, Sir, certainly; for, the week before she died, she said to me, "Saunier, I wish my poor aunt would not suffer herself to be flattered with hopes of my recovery:---I feel," added she, putting her hand upon her heart, "that I never shall be well again; and, thank God, I am perfectly resigned."

She

Fig2 CAROLINE DE MONTMORENCI.

She mentioned a thousand other circumstances; but I will no longer dwell on a theme which renders me totally unfit for any other, than to tell you, I that night slept at the inn, and returned, the next day, to the chateau, where, in the full luxury of sorrow, I dwelt on every object that recalled the past.---You will pity me, Henry, when I tell you, I collected resolution sufficient to visit the church:---The moment I entered, a sensation of grief and awe nearly overcame me; but, when my eye caught the marble tablet inscribed,

BENEATH LIE
THE REMAINS OF CAROLINE DE MONTMORENCI,
AGED NINETEEN,

I sunk oppressed on a bench near, and remained a considerable time in almost a state of insensibility. I did not, however, leave the sacred place without putting up

an earnest prayer for that merciful forgiveness I am conscious of so little deserving. Adieu, my dear friend; nothing less than the sincerity of your friendship would find an excuse for my ever leading you to subjects of sorrow and remorse; from which, had I listened in time, your advice would have preserved me.

TO THE SAME.

Paris.

YES, my estimable friend, I accept your kind, your hospitable invitation, and will fly from a place where gaiety seems an insult to my affliction; but where can I fly from myself? From conscience, or from reflection? Waking or sleeping they haunt me still; the name of Caroline seems blended with every sound, and her form connected with every object.

Captain de Montmorenci and his bride are here; Louvais saw them at court yesterday, and asked me who they were in mourning for. What a question? My positive belief of the Chevalier d'Erlach's marriage, arose from d'Orvilliers's description of his person, as the brothers are ex-

cessively alike, and my heated imagination suffered me not, for a moment, to surmise it might be the eldest; besides every circumstance seemed to prove my suggestions doubtless.

How useful a lesson might my sufferings, were they known, prove to those who think, what they deem the inclination of the moment, may, by the object of it, be as easily varied as on their side: how widely, how fatally different does it, I fear, often prove!

Alas! why did I not always think so!—Madame——I scarce can bring myself to write de Grammont, has, I find, quitted her mother, and lives entirely with that villain, Valmont; his known notorious character renders him an object beneath my resentment: I mean, in my way to you, to call at Madame de Bavois's; she

is unhappy ; and though the visit will cost me much, I will not add to her sufferings the thought that I treat her with contempt, because her daughter is unworthy.

To-morrow I set out, and shall be with you by Friday : the thought of our meeting again, gives me a satisfaction I feared I could no longer feel.



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